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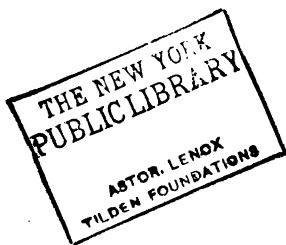
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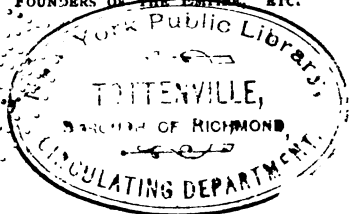
THE BRITAINS OF THE SOUTH

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BY

PHILIP H. GIBBS

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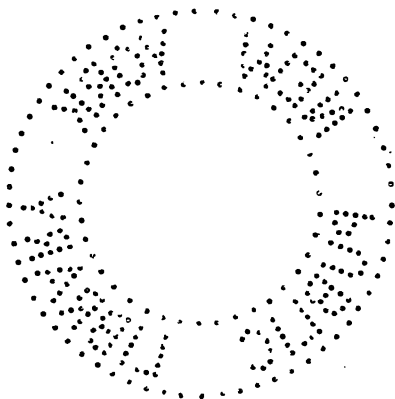
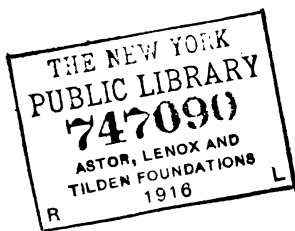


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AUSTRALASIA:

THE BRITAINS OF THE SOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE DISCOVERY.

WHEN we consider the condition of Australia at the present day, with its great and splendid cities, its prosperous population of British people, and its immense commerce, it is astonishing to think how short a time has passed—short according to the history of the world—since the great island-continent was an unknown land to civilised people.

Not until the latter part of the seventeenth century did the first Englishman set foot on Australian shores, and not until a hundred years afterwards—in 1788—was the first little colony of English settlers established upon Australian soil.

"The Great South Land."

Yet as far back as the fifteenth century there had been rumours of a great South Land which many travellers and scientific men believed to exist for thousands of miles from the Pacific Ocean to the South Pole.

Innumerable legends had grown up about this great Southern continent, as it was called. Many

people believed that it was inhabited by a highly civilised race of white people, that it contained towns more splendid than the richest cities of the Indian Empire, and that more wealth might be found in this wonderful country than in all the gold mines of the Indies.

The Secret of the Portuguese.

The Portuguese were the first to reach the unexplored shores of the land we now call Australia, and it is believed that in the sixteenth century the daring Portuguese seamen worked their way down to the east coast and recorded the results of their expeditions upon their charts.

But at that time there was a burning jealousy between Portugal, Spain, Holland, and England—the four great powers on the sea—as to who should first obtain dominion over newly discovered lands.

For this reason the Portuguese were very careful to keep the secret of their discoveries in the South seas, and they cleverly disguised their charts so that the actual position of the Australian coast was wrongly indicated, and this made the charts useless to all navigators except their own, who knew how to read them correctly by a secret code of explanation.

But the Spaniards, Dutch, and English were eagerly searching for this Terra Australis or Southern Continent, and ship after ship ploughed its way blindly across the Pacific Ocean, baffled in the object of its search by the numerous islands that are scattered to the north and west of the Australian coast.

In 1606 the Spanish navigator Torres lost his way in the group of islands called the New Hebrides. In

the same year a Dutch ship called the Duytken actually sailed right into the great Gulf of Carpentaria on the north-west coast of Australia, but returned home with the report that the shore was a part of New Guinea.

Then in 1642 the famous Dutch sailor Tasman discovered the island now called Tasmania after his name, and two years later he made another voyage, sailing across the western opening of the Torres Strait, between New Guinea and the northern point of Australia now known as Cape York.

The First Englishman in Australia.

In the following years many vessels followed in his wake, and at last, in 1658, William Dampier, an English adventurer, sailed along the western coast, returning ten years later, and coasting Western Australia for nearly a thousand miles.

It is interesting to learn that on one of those vessels was Alexander Selkirk, who was afterwards wrecked on a desert island, and became the original of that immortal book, "Robinson Crusoe," by Daniel Defoe.

Captain Cook's Voyages.

As yet, however, it was uncertain whether this land was a part of the great Southern continent which was still supposed to exist in the South Seas, and it was not until the great English sailor, Captain James Cook, was sent out by the British Government for further explorations that the old fable was at last disproved, and the real shape and size of Australia and New Zealand were definitely ascertained.

The Explorer's Early Years.

James Cook was the son of an agricultural labourer. He was born at the little village of Marton in Yorkshire on the 27th of October, 1728, and at the age of thirteen was apprenticed to a grocer named Sanderson, in the fishing village of Staithes.

But the duties of a 'prentice were distasteful to a lad who loved better to hear the yarns of the old sailors in the little harbour. At these times, forgetting all about Mr. Sanderson and his grocery, he would gaze out to sea and watch the sunlight shining on the sails of a fishing smack so that it looked like a ship of gold, or sparkling on the crests of the waves as they rippled towards the shore.

One day, when Mr. Sanderson came down into his shop early in the morning, he found that the shutters had not been taken down, and that his 'prentice's bed had not been slept in. James Cook had gone! Like Robinson Crusoe, the music of the sea had enchanted him, and he had run away to become a sailor.

Cook became an able seaman in the service of Messrs. Walker, shipowners, of Whitby, and for several years traded between Newcastle and Norway, obtaining a thorough knowledge of practical seamanship.

He rose to the rank of mate, but when war broke out between Great Britain and France, James Cook was patriotic enough to enlist again "before the mast," that is, as an able seaman, in the Royal Navy.

Distinguished Services.

He entered on board the *Eagle*, and sailed under Captain, afterwards Sir Hugh, Palliser to Canada, where

he took part in the capture of Louisburg from the French. Shortly afterwards he was appointed, by the recommendation of Captain Palliser, to be master of *H.M.S. Mercury*, and during the famous siege of Quebec distinguished himself by taking soundings of the River St. Lawrence, and making a chart for the guidance of the fleet under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances.

It is a remarkable thing that a man who entered the Navy before the mast should have attained the rank of master in so short a time, or indeed in any time.

The master of a vessel was responsible for the sailing of the ship. That a common seaman, with all the disadvantages of a lack of education, and with his time considerably occupied with his duties, should have obtained the highly scientific knowledge necessary for the navigation of a vessel, the writing of a ship's log, and the making of a chart, is extraordinary, and very much to Cook's honour.

Cook's First Voyage to the Pacific.

In 1768 Cook was given the command of an enterprise which was to bring him a world-wide fame, and to add his name to the honourable roll of the world's greatest explorers.

In this year the Royal Society, which was, and still is, a society of the most learned scientific men of this country, drew up a memorial to the King, informing him that an important astronomical event would take place in June, and, as it could best be observed from some place in the Pacific Ocean, they proposed that an expedition should be sent out by the Government

to make observations, and at the same time to bring to light some of the secrets of the Pacific.

King George gave his sanction to the proposal, and by good fortune James Cook, promoted to the rank of lieutenant, was given command of the expedition.

On the 26th of June the good ship *Endeavour*, with a crew of eighty-five seamen and a few distinguished men of science, sailed from Deptford, and in January of the following year entered the South Pacific Ocean. Having successfully taken the astronomical observations on the island of Tahiti, and discovering many islands not yet on the chart, they set sail once more, and directed their course into the unknown seas.

After a voyage of six weeks, during which they never once saw land, they sighted the pine-clad hills and the dim outline of the mountain ranges of North Island, New Zealand.

When first they attempted to land, the natives attacked them with great bravery, and they were obliged to retreat to the ship. They became more friendly, however, when they saw that the strangers were peacefully inclined, but their friendship was not much more agreeable than their ill-will, for they stole everything they could lay their hands upon.

Cook sailed along the coast, fighting or trading with the natives according to the manner in which they received him. At last, after sailing completely round the North Island, he anchored in Queen Charlotte's Sound, on the north coast of South Island. Here he landed and hoisted the Union Jack, taking possession of the country in the name of King George III.

First Sight of Australia.

At the end of nineteen days the *Endeavour* came within sight of a long coast-line. Captain Cook, standing on the quarter-deck of his stout little vessel, shading the sun from his eyes as he gazed towards the land, saw for the first time the great island of Australia.

Botany Bay.

As they approached the coast, they found that the cliffs formed a steep wall, which barred their landing. At last they anchored in Botany Bay, which was given the name by Cook, on account of the numerous plants of a previously unknown character which were gathered by the scientific men of the party. From the Bay they sailed round the coast, anchoring now and again in other bays, and trying to establish a friendship with the natives.

Australian Savages.

At first the "blackfellows," as they are generally called, showed a very warlike behaviour, and hurled spears at the Englishmen, until a few musket shots sent them flying in a terrible panic. By degrees Cook and his men succeeded in coming to friendly terms with them, but, like the New Zealanders, they were dreadful thieves.

Later on, indeed, their behaviour became still more unpleasant, for they set fire to the dry grass near Cook's encampment, and the flames spread with the rapidity of the "bush fires" which have been such a source of danger to the British colonists who have since made their homes in the country which Cook was the first to explore. The fire destroyed Cook's

camp, and he had to put out to sea again sooner than he intended.

The Founding of New South Wales.

Once more the *Endeavour* made its way along the coast, sailing in a northerly direction, and rounding Cape York. Cook now landed on a little island near this cape, and, hoisting the Union Jack amid the cheers of his crew, he gave the name of New South Wales to the whole of the eastern part of Australia which he had explored, and took possession of it in the name of King George.

Now, after many valuable discoveries, he resolved to set out on the homeward journey. Accordingly, he sailed to New Guinea, thence to the Cape of Good Hope, and so home, after one of the most memorable and adventurous voyages ever recorded.

In Cook's subsequent voyages he further explored the South Pacific Ocean, penetrating the great region of icebergs towards the South Pole sufficiently to demonstrate the falsity of the rumours concerning the "Great Southern Land." It is unnecessary to give the details of these expeditions, nor to describe how Captain Cook met with a tragic death at the hands of natives in the island of Hawaii.

But I have given a somewhat complete outline of his earlier voyages because undoubtedly it is largely owing to James Cook's courage, endurance, and skill that Australia is now a part of the British Empire.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONVICT SETTLEMENTS.

CAPTAIN COOK'S narrative of his voyages, aroused considerable interest in Great Britain, but as yet the thoughts of the English people did not turn towards Australia as a land in which they might found new homes and new wealth.

It happened, however, that at this time one of the greatest disasters in English history took place, that is, the loss of the American Colonies, and it was this event which, curiously enough, was the first cause of an English settlement being founded in Australia.

Transportation.

In those days the law was very severe, and, owing to the lack of education, there was an immense amount of crime in this country, so that every year large numbers of people were condemned to penal servitude.

For a long time it had been the custom of the Government to transport every criminal sentenced to a long term of imprisonment to the North American colonies, and when the United States declared their independence, it was a difficult problem for English statesmen to know what to do with the one thousand convicts who had annually been sent to that part of the world.

Acting upon the recommendation of Joseph

Banks, who had accompanied Captain Cook on his voyages, it was decided to forward these unfortunate people to Botany Bay.

The First Batch.

The first convict ship sailed for Australia in 1787, containing 850 men and women, under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, and a military guard.

Unfortunately, when Captain Phillip, the first Governor of New South Wales, landed at Botany Bay, he found that it was not nearly so suitable for his purpose as he had been led to expect, being a region of swamps and sandhills, wholly unsuitable to agricultural requirements.

Searching about for a better situation, he discovered a magnificent bay further along the coast, and, selecting a cove protected from the sea, where vessels would find a safe harbour, he decided to found his convict settlement on that spot, which he called Sydney, in honour of the English Colonial minister of that time.

Trials and Troubles.

The work of founding his small colony was a terribly difficult task. The country around was covered with dense woods, and required incessant labour before it could be cleared and tilled. But the prisoners brought here against their will were mostly idle vagabonds, entirely ignorant of farming, and always ready to give trouble by violent behaviour.

For a time it seemed as if they would all starve, and this danger was increased by a series of misfortunes. Of the sheep which Captain Phillip brought with him all died but one, and the cattle escaped into

the bush country and could not be recaptured. Store ships sent out from England were wrecked on the way out, and when other vessels arrived with food they brought with them large numbers of convicts, most of whom were unfit for work owing to their terrible sufferings during the long voyage.

The new Governor found himself, therefore, with a continually increasing convict population, incapable of maintaining themselves by the produce of the land.

The timely arrival of store ships from the Cape of Good Hope and China saved the colony from actual starvation, and after a time Captain Phillip explored the surrounding country, and discovered fertile tracts of land where corn could be grown with less difficulty than in the immediate neighbourhood of Sydney. By degrees, also, the convict labour converted the land into small farms, and the energy of Captain Phillip was rewarded by the development of the settlement into a fairly prosperous condition.

In the course of some years those convicts who had served out their terms of imprisonment were given small tracts of land and farming implements, and these freedmen, whose welfare depended upon their own industry, contributed to the success of the colony.

Treatment of the Convicts.

But in spite of this progress the early story of the convict settlements is a painful one. Discipline over a large population of men, most of whom had belonged to the lowest and most degraded classes of England, could only be maintained by the utmost severity on the part of the Governor, and the

smallest offence was punished by flogging or being put to work in chain-gangs. The military warders, many of whom were old convicts themselves, were often horribly brutal, and tyrannised over the men under their power so that the lives of some of them, and especially those of more refined nature, was a prolonged state of torture.

A Great Scandal.

To make matters worse, the officers of the New South Wales Regiment sent from England to maintain order were the cause of the worst forms of disorder and violence.

They were the only people in the colony privileged to sell spirits, and consequently it was to their advantage to encourage the convicts and freedmen to spend all the wages earned by their industry in drink.

The effect was deplorable. Drunkenness spread like a disease throughout the settlement, and was accompanied by its usual fellows—violence and vice.

It is not surprising that this condition of things led to an outbreak among the convicts, who tried to murder their officers and overpower the Governor and his guards. Fortunately the insurrection was quickly stamped out, but not without much loss of life and a period of wild disorder in Sydney.

A Military Rebellion.

In 1806 the British Government attempted to reform the state of affairs by sending out Captain Bligh as Governor, with orders to check the abuse of drinking by setting limits to the sale of liquor by the officers.

But the New South Wales Regiment refused to part with their privileges, and rebelled against the Governor shortly after his arrival, taking him prisoner and afterwards obliging him to return to England. This was more than the English Government would suffer patiently, and they acted promptly by withdrawing the rebellious regiment and punishing the chief offenders.

Progress and Prosperity.

In 1809 Colonel Lachlan Macquarie was appointed Governor, and now began a new era in the prosperity of New South Wales.

Colonel Macquarie was a man of strong character, noble mind, and benevolent principles, and he soon gained the affection and loyalty of the convicts as well as of the free population.

He made new and more humane rules for the treatment of the prisoners, and gave them every encouragement to obtain their freedom by good conduct. He also helped the emancipists, as the freed men were called, to better their position, and was anxious that they should suffer no drawback on account of their past.

Under his rule many public improvements were brought about. Roads were made through the Blue Mountains, which had previously blocked the way to the interior, the surrounding plains were explored, and a fortunate discovery of coal added a new source of prosperity to the settlers.

Introduction of Sheep.

But the most important means of progress was brought about by a man named John McArthur, who

had formerly been an officer in the New South Wales Regiment, whose bad reputation I have mentioned.

He had the idea that the climate and conditions of Australia were favourable to the rearing of Spanish merino sheep, the finest breed then known for the quality of their wool.

It was difficult, however, to obtain any of these sheep, because no one could take them out of Spain under penalty of death. But a few specimens were in the possession of King George III., and McArthur appealed to him, pointing out the enormous effect upon the future of Australia if such sheep could be successfully bred.

He was lucky in obtaining several of the desired variety, and his experiments in New South Wales were wonderfully successful.

The news of this success was quickly spread, and large numbers of the Australian ex-convicts took to sheep-farming. Governor Macquarie's roads encouraged their efforts, enabling them to find immense pastures for their flocks, and in a short time large and increasing supplies of Australian wool were sent over to the English markets.

In 1803, when John McArthur had first tried his experiment, he sent over 245 pounds of wool, but as early as 1820, 100,000 pounds were shipped to England, in 1830 $3\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds, and in 1840 the amount had increased to 7 million pounds of wool.

Sheep-farming became the chief industry of Australia, and the shepherds roaming over the land in search of new pastures became the means of exploring the bush country, or interior.



Photo : Kerry & Co., Sydney.

SHEEP-RAISING IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

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From Over the Seas.

The fortunes which were being built up by this industry proved the much-needed inducement for English farmers and adventurers to leave the old country to found new homes in Australia, instead of leaving the new land to convicts and ex-convicts.

Previous to 1825 the number of people who had come out to Australia of their own free will was only about three hundred every year. But from 1825 to 1829 the number had increased to 1,000 yearly, from 1830 to 1839, 5,300 yearly, and from 1840 to 1850, 12,700 yearly.

Thus it will be seen that in the course of years the number of free settlers in Australia vastly outnumbered the population who had been compelled to come willy-nilly, at the rate of about 1,000 every year, by the transportation laws of England.

CHAPTER III.

EXPLORATION.

ALL the early settlers were dotted about the south-eastern part of Australia (on the other side of the Blue Mountains which skirt the eastern coast), now divided into New South Wales and Victoria, and towns and villages were rapidly growing up and being connected with each other by good roads.

The Murray, Darling, Lachlan, and Murrumbidgee Rivers were mapped out through these two colonies, and then other parts of the great island-continent began to be explored by gallant and daring men, whom the spirit of adventure led on to push through unknown country into the interior.

Early Explorers.

A famous explorer named E. J. Eyre made a wonderful march from Adelaide in South Australia to King George's Sound at the southern end of Western Australia, a journey of 1,209 miles through a region in which no white man's foot had ever been before, past Lake Torrens, which he was the first to discover, through great sandy deserts and over barren mountain ranges, accomplished only by stubborn endurance and unfailing courage, with sufferings of hunger and thirst and blinding sun, such as few men could survive.

In 1843 to 1846 another explorer named Leichardt

traversed the north-eastern part of Australia, now known as Queensland, from its southern borders adjoining New South Wales to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

One of the greatest and most successful of all Australian explorations was accomplished by J. McDonnell Stuart, who crossed the whole continent from Adelaide in South Australia to Chambers Bay, opposite Melville Island, in the extreme north of the continent.

The result of this journey was the discovery of the Albert and Finke Rivers, the Macdonell and Ashburton ranges, and revealed an almost direct highway free from impassable deserts or impregnable mountains between the north and south.

A Tragic Expedition.

Almost at the same time as this successful expedition another was organised which met with a tragic fate.

Two explorers named Burke and Wills started from Melbourne and with enormous difficulty made their way right across the continent to the Gulf of Carpentaria, near the mouth of the River Flinders. Having refreshed themselves, the undaunted men began their return journey by another route, but they encountered a series of misfortunes and difficulties which retarded their progress, and they both perished miserably of starvation at Cooper's Creek.

Other expeditions followed which crossed Australia north and south, east and west, and the result of them was to demonstrate that a great part of the interior on the western side is composed of a vast

desert region of sand, or of dense scrub and "porcupine grass," which gives but little promise of fertile soil.

The Swan River Colony.

Meanwhile in Western Australia an experiment had been made by a certain Mr. Thomas Peel to found a colony in the Swan River district. He had taken out three hundred agricultural labourers, intending to conduct agricultural operations on a large scale. But as soon as they arrived these men deserted their leader and scattered in every direction with the idea of raising farms on their own account. They suffered terrible hardships because the district was a wilderness, and many died of hunger before the land could be made to yield a crop. But some survived and other settlers came out from England, so that the colony prospered in the course of time, and the towns of Fremantle and Perth were founded.

On the four sides of Australia, therefore, the colonies were steadily developing their areas and their industries, while roads were being built, small towns were springing up, and homesteads surrounded by well-tilled farms, or green pastures, were dotted about the fertile plains.

In fact, the foundations of the new colonies were being laid down upon which in a short time a new population would build an undreamt-of prosperity.

Already the continent was divided into its five divisions of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland, and their chief towns, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, and Brisbane, were already important centres of commerce. The colonists were justly proud of the

country in which they had made their homes, and were determined to resist any action on the part of the British Government which might injure the progress of the new colonies.

No More Convicts.

With these views they decided to protest against any further transportation of criminals, considering that arrivals of this kind were likely to be harmful to the interests of Australia now that it was inhabited by a free and law-abiding population.

The British Government were a long time before they were willing to abolish the transportation system, but at last, in the face of great public indignation and determined opposition in the Australian Colonies, they agreed to abandon the old system, and from the year 1853 no convict-ship has landed its undesirable passengers upon Australian shores.



Photo : E. Sweet & Co., Adelaide.

PROCLAMATION TREE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER IV.

THE GREAT GOLD RUSH.

THE year 1851 is the dividing line in Australian history. Before that year the progress of the country had been due to sheep-farming, cattle-ranching, and other agricultural industries. But then came a new discovery which changed the whole character of Australia at a single word. And that word was Gold.

The Discovery.

A man named Edward Hargraves, reading of the fortunes being made in the goldfields of California, left New South Wales to try his luck in that region.

But as he searched for the precious metal in the Californian gullies the remembrance came to him that in the country round about his old home in the rocky Macquarie valley near the town of Bathurst he had seen exactly the same kind of gullies, or ravines. Was it not likely that they too might hide rich veins of gold?

Full of this idea, he hastened back, and on February 12th, 1851, he found unmistakable traces of gold at a place called Summerhill Creek. A month of further searching showed that the rocky channels for seventy miles around gave equal promise of gold deposits. Edward Hargraves thereupon informed the Government of his wonderful discovery, and made it known to the public.

The Gold Fever.

Immediately, as if a flame had been put to dry grass, the passion of gold swept across Australia.

Farmers deserted their land, lawyers their desks, clerks their stools, the old and the young, honest men and criminals, men of good birth and men from the lowest ranks of society, swarmed out with pickaxe and spade to the Macquarie valley, and what had been peaceful country, where only a few wild creatures roamed in safety, became a scene of uproar and disorder, crowded with men eager to ransack the earth for its treasures.

The Victorian Gold Fields.

Gold was quickly found in sufficient quantities to reward many of the lucky diggers with wealth "beyond the dreams of avarice," and the news of these finds caused immense excitement, not only in Australia, but in every part of the world.

Then the Government of Victoria offered the sum of £200 for the discovery of a gold mine within two hundred miles of Melbourne.

Almost immediately the discovery was made, and followed by others with amazing rapidity, and each richer than the one before — on July 5th at Anderson's Creek, on August 8th at Buninyong, on September 8th at Ballarat, on December 10th at Bendigo.

New South Wales was almost deserted and forgotten in the excited "rush" to the goldfields of Victoria. By the autumn of 1852 at least 70,000 men were digging in this colony. Ninety thousand men arrived from over the sea during this year, and during

the three following years the arrivals amounted to the prodigious number of 250,000.

The Mining Camps.

This new and enormous population was the strangest in the world, and the mining camps where they congregated were equally remarkable.

Gangs of ex-convicts, and convicts escaped from the prisons of Tasmania before their penal servitude was expired, invaded the diggings, and brought with them the rough and brutal manners of the criminal classes. These were joined by gaol-birds and riff-raff from every other country, who added to the wildness of the life in camp.

But from every part of Australia and from every part of Europe came good men and true, brought there by the love of adventure as well as by the glamour of gold.

Young men, stout of heart and limb, who hated city life in the "old country," men who had lost their fortunes or failed in the battle of life, farmers from the Australian bush, cowboys from the backwoods of Canada, French political exiles, German professors and doctors, even an English nobleman now and again, came out to lead the rough life in camp.

In many of these men the hardships and dangers brought out fine qualities of endurance and pluck and good-comradeship. Many are the stories told of the self-sacrifice of friend to friend, of men nursing a sick chum as tenderly as any woman, and of the generous hospitality by which these diggers would share their meagre rations with a chum "down on his luck," as they called it in the slang of the mining camps.

Disorder and Drink.

But there is another side to the picture, which is not so pleasing. Every night the diggings would be noisy with the drunken singing and shouting of men who were drinking away their senses and their gold in the vile spirits sold in the "canteens," or "grog-shops," of the camp. And now and again a shot would ring out through the night air, telling of some murderous fight taking place in the quarters where the rough set herded together.

This was the great curse of the gold-diggings—*Drink.*

Many of the men would toil early and late crushing the quartz and sifting the precious dust from the soil, touching not a drop of liquor until they had made their "little pile," as they called it.

Then, dropping pick and shovel and sieve, they would go off and drink their way through their earnings until not a grain of dust remained upon them, or until they were drunk enough to be robbed of the rest by the publicans. Then they would stagger back, mere wrecks in mind and body, to begin all over again.

The Curse of Gold.

It seemed as if the very touch of gold brought a curse with it. Men who made immense fortunes by a lucky find, in nine cases out of ten squandered it in reckless gambling or in riotous living which ended in ruin.

The Hon. Finch Hatton tells the story of four men who, in a short time, took £25,000 apiece out of a claim. "Previous to their striking gold they had been sober, industrious men; but in two years three

out of the four, and one of their wives, were dead from drink, and the fourth had lost all he was worth in prospecting other claims."

The same writer also tells of a man, originally a blacksmith by trade, who one day struck gold after months of despair. "In a short time he was in receipt of £500 a day, and continued at that for a very long time. I don't think anyone, not even himself, knew exactly how much he was worth. If he had simply sat down and stuck to his money as fast as it came in he would have been one of the richest men in the colony. But he never did any good. He taught himself to read and write, took to wild speculation in other mines, in racehorses, in wheat, in everything; drank like a fish . . . and finally his bankruptcy appeared a short time ago in the *London Times*."

Deserted Towns.

For a time "the great gold rush," as these events were called, seemed to threaten ruin to New South Wales and Victoria.

The towns were largely deserted, and all the small industries in the country districts beyond the range of the diggings were entirely abandoned.

In spite of enormous wages being offered, it was extremely difficult for employers to obtain servants or labourers of any kind. Carpenters and blacksmiths could earn a pound to twenty-five shillings a day if they would only stay at their trade. Any owner of a strong waggon could charge £100 per ton for goods to be carried to the goldfields. The proprietors of "grog-shanties" and gambling saloons made enormous fortunes.

New Markets.

The only compensation to the other parts of Australia which had been abandoned for a time by its hardiest, most adventurous spirits, was the new markets created in the camp.

For gold, however valuable in other respects, cannot take the place of food, and miners had to eat in order to work. Consequently, enormous supplies of meat were sent from New South Wales, to the benefit of the sheep-farmers and cattle-ranchers; flour was sent in abundance from South Australia, and vegetables and timber from Tasmania.

Such prices had never been heard of before as were got from the diggers and paid for in "dust." Meat was a shilling a pound instead of twopence, and wheat half a guinea a bushel.

Another advantage resulting to the colony of South Australia was the number of new settlers, who, having been unlucky at the diggings, came to take up land and earn their living in a quieter and steadier occupation.

The Licensing Fees.

The Government of Victoria endeavoured to get a fair share of the gold discovered within its colony by charging a licence fee to every miner. This was first settled at thirty shillings a month, but afterwards it was proposed to increase this to £3 a month.

Such a licensing fee was not a hardship to men who had "struck gold," but to large numbers of diggers who could barely keep themselves from starvation it was a very serious tax.

The opposition was determined and violent. Many of the miners refused to pay a fee at all, and the

"digger hunts" which were held twice a week by Government officers for the discovery of unlicensed men worked the camps into a state of dangerous excitement.

Thousands of angry men declared their hatred against the Government, and at public meetings the popular cries were, "Diggers, avenge your wrongs! No quarter! Down with oppression!"

The Eureka Stockade.

The excitement reached a crisis when the murderer of one of the diggers was, by an error of justice, left unpunished by the magistrates. The most ignorant and prejudiced of the miners thought the Government had purposely let the murderer go free, and they determined to revenge themselves. On November 30th, 1852, they stoned an official appointed to collect the licence fees, and then began to drill and to arm themselves with guns and pikes in order to give a "warm reception" to General Mickle, who was advancing from Melbourne with a detachment of soldiers to restore order.

They barricaded themselves in a lane through the camp called Eureka Street, and afterwards famous as "the Eureka stockade."

At half-past two on a Sunday morning General Mickle marched upon the camp with 100 mounted men and 176 infantry. As soon as they came within range the insurgents fired upon them from behind the barricade of overturned carts and piles of timber. An officer named Captain Wise and four soldiers were mortally wounded, but General Mickle charged at the head of his small force, and with one determined rush

captured the stockade and hauled down the rebel flag. Thirty of the diggers were killed and 125 taken prisoners. The rest surrendered tamely enough, thinking discretion the better part of valour.

After this famous episode in Australian history the Government held an enquiry into the miners' grievances, and finally abolished the licensing fees altogether, replacing them by "miners' rights," each of which cost one pound yearly. This was a much fairer arrangement, and was agreed to with satisfaction by the diggers.

CHAPTER V.

BUSHRANGERS AND BLACKFELLOWS.

IN those days, when large quantities of gold and great sums of money were being carried from one part of Australia to another by lucky diggers, who, as soon as they made a "pile," as they called it, set out from the diggings towards the cities to spend it in extravagant living, the lonely roads were often infested with robbers.

Many ruffians who had been set free from convict prisons, or lazy and lawless rogues who cared neither for the hard work of the diggings nor for settled occupations on the farms, roamed about the country in small gangs, attacking mail-coaches, robbing travellers, and shooting anyone bold enough to show fight.

Highway Robbery.

During the early years of the "gold rush" there were so many of these bushrangers, as they were called, that men travelling about with money on their persons went in peril of life and fortune.

On every lonely road leading from one town to another in New South Wales and Victoria not a week went by without a highway robbery, accompanied often with violence and murder.

Australians still remember tales told by their grandfathers of lumbering mail-coaches being suddenly pulled up by their drivers when the hoarse

shouts of "Hands up!" rang down the road, and a band of armed ruffians sprang from the hedges, seizing the horses' bridles, thrusting heavy pistols through the coach windows, and shooting down any man who did not instantly hold his hands above his head as a sign of surrender.

Unfortunately, there were so many lawless people in the colonies at that time, who secretly aided the bushrangers and shielded them from capture, that it was extremely difficult to bring them to justice. Even when the police succeeded in tracking them down and capturing the ringleaders, it was often impossible to get an honest jury in the district to declare them guilty, as whole neighbourhoods were full of their spies and accomplices.

The Gardiner Gang.

One of the most notorious bushrangers was a man named Frank Gardiner, who was joined by three other men, named Johnnie Gilbert, John Dunn, and an Irishman named O'Meally.

Gardiner had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for horse-stealing in Victoria, but soon escaped from the convict prison and took to the bush.

Gilbert was a mere boy, belonging to respectable people, and joined the bushrangers more out of a spirit of adventure than from really criminal motives.

This gang committed innumerable robberies. They were known to have "bailed up" six mail-coaches, from which they obtained a great deal of plunder, besides forcing scores of travellers to give up their money.

"Bailed Up."

Their most famous exploit was the attack upon a gold escort from the Lachlan diggings on June 15th, 1862. Over 5,500 ounces of gold, valued at £21,000, besides coin and bank notes worth £7,490, were packed inside the coach, which was driven by a man named John Fagan and guarded by three policemen.

Gardiner and his friends, eight in number, lay in wait at the bend of the road, and as the coach reached this point they rushed out, firing a volley at it. One of the policemen was severely wounded, and the other two captured after a desperate struggle.

The bushrangers then rifled the coach, and, dividing the gold and money into eight parts, rode off with their booty. Fortunately the news of this outrage soon reached the headquarters of the police, and a strong body immediately mounted good horses and galloped off in the direction of the robbers.

After a fast and furious chase the bushrangers had to abandon their horses and most of the plunder, which had exhausted the poor animals. Four of the men were afterwards arrested and put upon their trial. But the first jury refused to give a verdict of guilty, and when a fresh jury was obtained to give this verdict, it is extraordinary, as showing the state of public opinion in Australia at that time, that nearly 16,000 people put their signatures to a petition received by the Governor praying that the lives of the bushrangers might be spared.

Gardiner and Gilbert.

Gardiner, the leader of this gang, had escaped capture, and after some time, growing tired of his

perilous life, made his way into the colony of Queensland and opened a store, where he carried on business successfully for two years.

At the end of that time, his whereabouts being discovered, he was arrested, tried, and condemned to thirty-two years' penal servitude. But when he had been in prison for ten years he was released on account of another public petition to the Governor.

The lad Gilbert joined the gang of another noted bushranger named Ben Hall, who committed a long series of crimes.

But one night, after another attack upon a mail-coach, Gilbert was traced to a farmhouse by the police who were searching for him. In a desperate attempt at escape Johnnie Gilbert was shot down, and thus died, after an extraordinary career of crime, at only twenty-three years of age. Ben Hall himself was afterwards killed in a similar way, his body being riddled with no less than thirty-three bullets.

The story of this gang is an example of the violence committed in many parts of New South Wales and Victoria. For many years the Government found it beyond their power to stamp out the evil, but at last, by stronger laws and an increased number of police, the bushrangers were compelled to abandon their villainous practices.

The Blackfellows.

Up to the present I have only said a few words about the natives of Australia.

When Europeans first discovered and settled in the island-continent, there were about 150,000 of these blackfellows, as they are generally called; but

although that number seems large when we consider them altogether, it is but a small and almost insignificant population for a country twenty-five times the size of Great Britain and Ireland.

They were scattered about in small tribes, living in a perfectly savage state, roaming about naked in summer, sheltering themselves sometimes in caves, sometimes in small huts made of twigs and leaves, but never remaining long in one place.

They offered no combined resistance to the white men who came from over the seas to live in their land, and whose wonderful knowledge and weapons made them seem almost like gods to these simple children of Nature. Some of them became friendly enough to the British colonists, and were willing to act as guides through the bush, and in other ways to serve our people.

But, like most savage races, they were great thieves, and often aroused the anger and hatred of farmers by stealing cattle or sheep for one of their great feasts.

There is no doubt that when acts of theft were committed like this, the rough men of the bush hunted down the blackfellows in their neighbourhood as if they had been wild beasts, and killed any who fell into their hands.

Hatred and Revenge.

Naturally, therefore, the blackfellows themselves were not slow in taking their revenge whenever they saw their chance.

Many are the stories told of lonely homesteads being surrounded in the daytime when the men-folk were away looking after the cattle, and of women and

children being murdered most cruelly by bands of black fellows filled with hate against the white strangers.

And often a man riding on a solitary journey through the bush would be followed by native savages, creeping silently from tree to tree, until a given signal, a shower of those curved sticks called boomerangs would strike him to the earth, or a flint-headed spear would pierce him to the heart.

It is difficult to blame the colonists altogether for their hard treatment of the blackfellows when one thinks how terrible it must have been to live in constant danger from unseen foes, and, worse still, the daily dread of harm coming to the women and children at home.

But nothing will excuse the almost fiendish cruelty with which some of the early settlers revenged themselves for damage done by the blackfellows.

A Dreadful Tale.

There is a horrible story told of a man who lived at a place called the Long Lagoon, in Queensland.

The blacks had been giving him a lot of trouble, killing his shepherds and stealing his sheep. His whole farm was surrounded by a tribe of them, waiting every opportunity for further mischief.

The farmer, enraged almost to the point of madness, thought he would play a trick on them.

One day, when he knew that his movements were being watched, he packed a large dray with baked loaves and started out from head-quarters as if he were going the round of the shepherds' huts. When he got to the Long Lagoon a wheel came off as if by accident, and the dray went down a

Appearing to be greatly annoyed and unable to get the dray out of the rut, the farmer went back to his log-house. Of course, as soon as he had turned his back, the blacks made a raid upon the loaves, carrying off every one. Then, on the outskirts of the farm, they sat down to relieve their hunger, and devoured the fresh bread eagerly.

But it was a fatal greed. The farmer had mixed a strong poison with his flour, and the next morning a heap of corpses lay stretched upon the bank of the Long Lagoon.

To this day the tale is still told with a shudder of that horrible revenge, and when one hears it one can hardly wonder at the atrocities committed on their side by the savage men of the woods.

In another chapter later on I will say something further about the natives of Australia, but in the present place I have desired to show some of the dangers of life in the bush during the early years of the Colonies.

The Progress of Australia.

The story of Australia from the days of the first gold discoveries is one of rapid development and increasing prosperity.

From 1870 onwards, railways and telegraphs have been constructed east and west, north and south, across the whole continent, so that the communication between one city and another is easily established, in spite of the great distances.

The Overland Wire.

The carrying of the first telegraph wire across country from Adelaide in the south to Port Darwin

in the north was a feat of splendid daring and endurance.

Only once before had the distance between been traversed by a small party of explorers, and then with infinite difficulty. And now to accomplish the great work of taking the electric wire across this vast tract, so that men might speak across the continent almost as quickly as the flash of thought, it was found necessary to dig wells all along the route to supply men and animals with water. Provisions, telegraph posts, the wire itself, and the necessary tools had to be carried over rocky and sandy deserts, until at last, after two years of courageous effort, the splendid task was completed.

Port Darwin at that time was in the midst of an almost uninhabited region, and it may at first seem strange why so much energy should have been spent in taking the telegraph wire to such a lonely and unimportant place.

But the reason of it was one of immense importance to Australia, as well as to our own country, being for the purpose of establishing a connection by wire between the Colonies and the Mother Country. A cable had been laid from Port Darwin to the island of Java and continued to India, which was already in touch with England by cable.

Both the Australians and the people of this country make full use of this means of communication. The telegraphic traffic is indeed enormous, being double that of Great Britain in proportion to the population.

The Australian Fleet.

Magnificent lines of steamers carry on a frequent service between the various colonies of Australia and

with Europe and America. The sea passage between Plymouth and Adelaide may now be covered in thirty-four days. The principal lines of steamers are the Peninsular and Oriental, the Union, the British India, and two French and German lines.

In order to protect her interests in case of war with a European nation such as France or Germany, who possess some of the islands of the Pacific, and are therefore near neighbours of Australia, the Colonials pay a sum of money to the British Government in return for the services of the fleet of battleships always stationed in Australian waters.

These vessels have been specially built for the purpose, and have been called by Australian names, such as the Ringarooma, Mildura, Boomerang, and Karakatta. They are fast and well-armed ships, and there is no doubt that if trouble occurred in that part of the world they would give a good account of themselves.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN THE BUSH.

THE real life of Australia—what I might call the sap of the country—is not in the great cities, but in the “back country,” or the bush, as it is generally called.

Here the men who represent all that is best and most hopeful in Australia are toughened by a toil, hard, healthy, and adventurous, which brings out all those strong virtues of manhood which do not often thrive in the less natural influences of city life.

And here is the wealth of the country represented by thousands of miles of sheep runs, by innumerable herds of fat cattle, and by gold diggings where the earth and rock are searched and sifted for the metal which has been the curse as well as the fortune of Australia.

Here in the bush a man returns to that natural life of open-air toil away from the in-door drudgery of civilisation, and not only are his muscles hardened by healthy work, but his moral character is strengthened by endurance of bodily hardships, and by tests of nerve and courage when every day and every hour of his life prove the mettle of his nature.

The Charm of the Bush.

It is the roughest life on earth, this life of the bush, and yet it has a charm that clings about the heart of any man who has once filled his nostrils

with the scent of the gum trees and listened to the butcher birds piping their morning song, and slept at nights in a rough log hut with the native dogs howling away in the woods, so that such a one may never settle down in the after life of the towns without sometimes a great longing surging up in his heart to go back to the great solitudes, and the hard toil, and the simple pleasures of that primitive existence, where the pipe of baccy—an ounce per day—is the one great luxury, and the rough, good-hearted fellowship of one's mates the only society.

Rough Riding.

The "new chum" who leaves a city desk in the Old Country in quest of a new life under healthier conditions has a hard time of it for the first few years.

Perhaps he thinks he can ride—if he can't, he had better stop at home—but it is one thing to sit tight on a well-bred English horse, and another to face a buck-jumper with a mouth of cast iron, the temper of a fiend, and the tricks of an acrobat.

The preliminary trials of a new chum are a source of infinite amusement to old residents, and they turn out to watch his endeavours to corner his animal in the yard and to get the bridle over its head.

The bush horse is as cunning as a fox, and instantly detects a raw hand. It waits for the novice with a head cocked on one side and a wicked gleam in the eye that means mischief. The soothing words of the would-be rider have no conciliatory effect, and no sooner has he approached than the animal gives a terrifying snort and plunges off like a flash of



Photo : Will Stark, Bransford, Queensland.

A TYPICAL AUSTRALIAN HOUSE.

lightning, rolling the man over in the dust with a vicious kick out behind that would break every rib in his body if he came within range.

The Buck-Jumper.

There is no more appalling sight to watch than a buck-jumping performance. With its head tucked between its fore-legs so that its jaw is close to its hind feet, the Australian horse arches its back like a cat in a temper, and in this extremely awkward position for its rider, makes a series of "high jumps," sometimes forwards, sometimes backwards, sometimes sideways, varying the performance by rolling on the ground, and pursuing these tactics until he has thrown his rider or has become exhausted in every limb and muscle.

But a true Colonial will sit a buck-jumper without a tremor, and it is a frequent exploit for a man to sit the roughest horse in the yards with a half-crown between each thigh and the saddle and keep them there until the horse bucks its wind out. When once a horse has acquired the gentle art of bucking it never loses its proficiency, and curiously enough there is hardly a horse in Australia that does not buck, which shows again how "evil communications corrupt good manners."

A Cattle-Run.

When a man can ride one of these animals he is in a fair way to make himself useful on a cattle station, where he must be in the saddle from early morning to the close of day. A good cattle-run sometimes covers an area of over a hundred square

miles, and contains a herd of three thousand to five thousand cattle.

The stockman's daily routine is to ride the boundaries, starting as soon as the sun has risen, and coming back only when it sets. He has to see that no cattle belonging to his own herd have strayed outside the boundaries, and, if they have, to chase them back again. It is monotonous work, but not without its dangers. In chasing a stray bullock a stockman will often have a nasty fall, and many is the time that the blanched bones of a skeleton have been found on one of these great and lonely runs, telling a grim and painful story of a man dying by inches beyond reach of a helping hand.

"Rounding-Up."

The exciting times on a cattle station are at the "mustering," the "cutting out," and the "drafting," the first being when the herds are gathered in to their respective camps into which each run is divided, the second when the fat cattle are separated from their fellows for the market, and the third when they are periodically brought into the yards for branding.

On these occasions the work of "rounding-up" the cattle is agreeably varied by sundry bull-fights of brief but exciting duration, when a refractory young animal with the strength of a wild bison and the speed of a race-horse, charges any being on two legs or a horse who happens to be within his line of vision. Such a vision does not seem to lend itself to humour, but familiarity breeds contempt, and a charge in the yards is always greeted with uproarious laughter, especially if the bull's horns get extremely close to its object.

Even the most experienced men are liable to get hurt occasionally, and very few who have worked a good long time among bush cattle have escaped without being horned at least once or twice.

Danger and Drollery.

The Hon. Finch-Hatton, in his book "Advance Australia," gives the following amusing account of an incident in a stockyard.

"In some yards," he writes, "it is the fashion to leave a big post or the stump of a tree about four feet high in the middle of a big yard, so as to afford shelter for anyone who is charged and has no time to get to the rails at the side. We had nothing of that kind at Mount Spencer; but I remember a most ludicrous scene at Gracemere, a station near Rockhampton, where there was one of these harbours of refuge in the middle of the yard.

"Seven or eight men were yarding up a mob of cattle, when suddenly an old cow came out and charged in a most business-like manner.

"Five men all ran for their lives for the post. The first who got there, of course, was all right; but there was only room for one, so the next man had to hang on to the belt of the man in front, and so on, till the whole five were extended in a row.

"The cow charged, and of course no one could tell which side of the post she would pass, so that it was not until she was within a few feet that the human tail swung round out of her way, a yell of terror escaping from the last two men, as the brute's horns passed within an inch of them.

"Quick as lightning the cow turned and charged

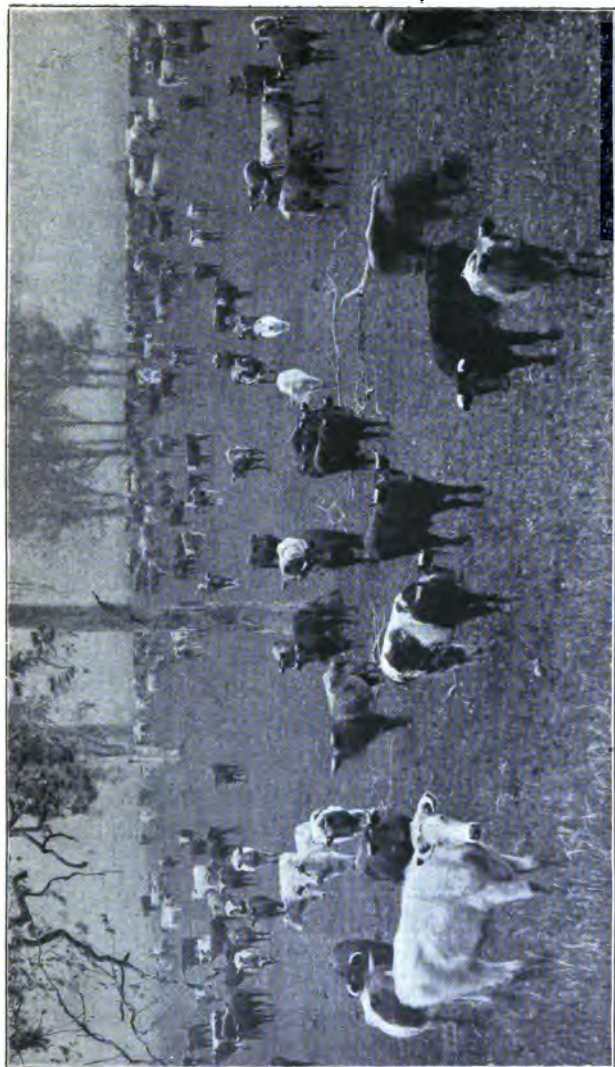


Photo : Kerry & Co., Sydney.

CATTLE DRIVING IN AUSTRALIA

again, four times the tail swept round, their howls of anguish mingling with shouts of laughter from the men on the rails who were looking on. Anything more ridiculous than the whole scene cannot possibly be imagined.

"The last man at the end was very fat and very nervous, and had no business in the yard at all. He was evidently getting weak from terror and exhaustion, so a diversion was made by those on the rails, and the cow having been induced to charge someone else, the men in the middle of the yard were enabled to leave their post and make for the rails."

The old hands on a "station" have an extraordinary knowledge of their cattle, and it will hardly be believed by the town dweller in this country, and yet it is an absolute fact, that a stockman with a herd of 1,200 animals in his care will know each one by sight, and upon riding the boundaries will know at once which has got out of bounds.

On a Sheep Run.

Life on the great sheep runs of Australia is a tame thing compared to cattle ranching, but more full of risk commercially, owing to the terrible diseases which occasionally rot enormous flocks from end to end.

Then, too, the shepherd's life, though pleasant for a time, becomes extremely monotonous and dreary, because the loneliness of riding the boundaries is not enlivened by the excitement of chasing animals in a semi-wild condition as befalls an Australian "cow-boy." It is no uncommon thing for them to lose their reason, and the lunatic asylums are frequently occupied by these poor fellows.

Splitting Timber.

A man who wishes to be prosperous in the bush must never shirk any kind of rough work, and must have a practical knowledge of everything that goes to make a good farm.

One of the most expensive items of farming is the fencing, and it is very necessary for the manager to know the best kind of timber for the purpose and the trees that cut up best into posts and rails. This knowledge can only be gained after an apprenticeship by cutting down trees, and splitting them into the required lengths.

Sawing wood for ten hours at a stretch or splitting it with a heavy axe, while the sun pours down its rays upon one's back, is perhaps the hardest work a man can do. But those who have gone through this apprenticeship often look back to it with pleasure as days when perfect health and vigorous exercise made life a thing worth having.

The Day's Work.

After eight hours dreamless sleep the "new chum," who is generally put on to this job, rises just as the sun is flooding the sky with a delicate pink light. The air is still and cold, but wonderfully fresh and invigorating, and the first thing every bushman does is to light his pipe, so that the scent of the tobacco mingles with the fragrance of the gum-trees and the blood-wood flowers.

By the time he has got to his work he is wet up to his knees with dew, and feels sufficiently chilly to roll up his sleeves and begin his day's labour with a vigour which presently puts him to a warm glow.

Then the sun gets higher and dries up all the dew, until presently the wood-cutter finds himself being roasted under its fierce glare.

At midday, when he wonders whether he will melt away into a pool of grease, he knocks off work and boils up his "billy" for dinner.

It seems strange that a dish of steaming tea made in a billy-can should be found most refreshing by the bushmen when they are bathed in perspiration after grilling in the sun, but so it is, and no Australian would think a meal worth having unless it were accompanied by a pannikin of tea.

At the end of the day the wood-cutter goes home tired in every limb and every muscle. But it is a pleasant, healthy kind of weariness, which makes him feel perfectly at peace with himself and the world when he stretches himself on a skin rug by the side of the log fire and lights up his pipe with one of the glowing embers, puffing away silently and happily until it is time to "turn in," and enjoys such a night's rest as no man does whose life is spent in cities.

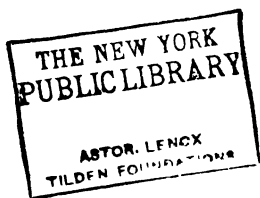
Disturbances by Night.

Yet there are times when even the weariest of "new chums" finds his night's rest disturbed. Away in the bush the wild native dogs begin howling, and instantly every dog on the "station" joins in the chorus, seeming to hurl defiance at their savage kin.

Then inside the room where the new chum has stretched himself upon a camp bed, a little battalion of mosquitoes attacks him from different points of vantage, goading him into fury, but baffling every attempt to kill them or get rid of them.



A FIRE IN THE BUSH.



Now and again the man will pull the rug off his bed before turning in, and find it already occupied by a great carpet snake, ten or eleven feet long, which is having a snooze in comfortable quarters.

Snakes.

In many parts of the bush, such as the cane-fields of Mackay, or the reed-beds on the Murray river, snakes are very plentiful, and exceedingly dangerous.

There are five different poisonous snakes in Queensland, which is most plagued by them: the black snake, the brown snake, the tiger snake, the diamond snake, and the death adder. A bite from any of those creatures means almost certain death unless the proper remedies are instantly applied. But in the case of the death adder no remedy has yet been found to be of any use, and there is hardly a case known in which the bite has not been fatal.

Curiously enough, people in Australia take no precautions whatever against these snakes, except that of keeping their eyes open. It is often thought that those who live in the bush generally wear top-boots reaching to the knees, but this is a mistake, because the climate is too hot as a rule for such boots to be worn without extreme discomfort.

Spiders.

Almost more horrible than any snake is a small black spider with a crimson mark on its back, which is generally found in old timber, and often takes up its dwelling in a house.

Snakes always wait till they are trodden upon

or injured before they attack a man, but these black little venomous creatures will bite without any excuse. The tiny prick causes intense agony, which ends often with death. But as a rule it drives its victim into madness or causes paralysis. The only thing to do to prevent these terrible results is boldly to cut out the flesh all round the spot where the bite has been made.

Bush Fires.

Among the incidents of life in the bush are the great bush fires which take place every year, beginning in July.

Many stories have been told of these fires, and most boys have been thrilled with narratives describing herds of cattle and horses flying for their lives before the swift advance of the devouring flames. But at the present day a bush fire is not always so terrible. The grass which grows rank and coarse is purposely set on fire by the farmers, and as soon as it is all burnt to the ground a new growth comes up of fresh young grass called "burnt feed," which provides the finest pasture for sheep and cattle.

During the three months of July, August and September these fires are lit for hundreds of miles in small patches at a time, and it is a wonderful sight to watch the flames at night flickering across the fields with the greyish blue smoke creeping up the hillsides.

The Sports of Australia.

Among the sports favoured by the Australians, duck-shooting is most popular, the rivers and lagoons

swarming with every kind of wild duck, who come down to the water during the dry season from October to January.

A more exciting sport, however, is "pig-sticking," when the wild pigs are hunted on the Blue Mountains.

It is only an expert horseman and a man with a steady nerve who is equal to this kind of sport, because the rough and broken ground is extremely dangerous to ride over at a break-neck pace in chase of the fierce little animals who run as fast as foxes, until they get exhausted and "squat." This is when the pig turns to bay, and sitting upon its haunches waits for the rider to approach, when it charges horse and man with a furious snort of rage.

The Australian horses are not trained in the game of "pig-sticking" like those in India, and are so terrified when the boar turns upon them that they begin bucking in the manner I have previously described. To spear a pig at the same time that one sits a horse, jumping and twisting like a piece of live indiarubber, is not the easiest thing in the world.

Alligators.

The banks of the creeks, lagoons, and water-holes of the Australian bush swarm with crocodiles, or alligators, as they are more generally called.

"They have a great fancy," says Mr. Finch-Hatton, "for dogs in the way of food when they can get them; but their diet extends over a varied range, from a full-grown cow to a paving stone.

"On one of the plantations on the Pioneer an alligator was seen to perform a feat which gives some

idea of the enormous strength which these brutes possess. The milking cows belonging to the plantation used to go down every morning to the river to drink. The bank was rather steep, and the water there deepened very quickly. As one of the cows was standing drinking, with her forelegs in the water, an alligator came up and caught her by the nose, and in spite of the animal's struggles, held firmly on, and succeeded in dragging her down to the depths of the pool. The incline of the bank was, of course, in the reptile's favour, and no doubt terror deprived the cow partly of her strength; but, anyway, the pair of them disappeared, and the cow never was seen again.

"With regard to the paving stones, no one knows whether they are taken in for ballast, or to assist digestion, or to fill a vacuum caused by hunger, but it is a very common thing to find half-a-dozen stones, each double the size of a man's fist, in the stomach of an alligator."

Here, then, are some of the sights and scenes of life in the bush by which we may learn how hard and healthy is the work, and how full of interest and adventure is the career, of those men who make the wealth and greatness of Australia.

CHAPTER VII.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

THE entrance to the colony of New South Wales from the sea is through one of the most magnificent harbours in the world.

The wide sweeping bay of Port Jackson, or, as it is generally called, Sydney Harbour, is a sight which fills all travellers to Australia with astonishment and admiration.

The Harbour.

Two great rocks called The Heads guard the entrance to the bay, leading into a vast expanse of water which flows into innumerable other inlets, each of which is like a miniature of the great harbour itself.

These arms, or, as it would be more correct to say, these fingers of the sea, cut their way between high red rocks, so that when one steams towards one of them in a fast excursion steamer it seems as if one were rushing on to the very rocks themselves, until suddenly a little gateway appears, and the steamer makes its way into a creek extending for miles.

Upon the heights of the rocks divided by these inlets the villas and trees of the suburbs are seen to the north, and the crowded buildings of the great city of Sydney to the south, seeming to perch upon ledges overhanging the sea.

Upon the villa side the gardens are ablaze with flowers, brilliant even in the depth of winter, the rich,

glowing colours of Australian blossoms being clearly seen right out in the bay.

The people of Sydney are naturally proud of this "gateway" to the city, and they are so fond of talking about "our harbour" that the words are used as a joke against them by the people of other Australian towns.

The City of Sydney.

Sydney itself is an old-fashioned, straggling, jumbled-up city, the streets being narrow and winding.

It is said they were built on the tracks made by the droves of cattle which came down in the early days of the colony to the market places. Houses were dotted down in these rough highways, gradually joining each other to form streets as the population increased.

In the busiest thoroughfares there is a constant crush of traffic, made up of cabs, omnibuses, and steam tramway-cars, which reminds the Englishman of streets in the East End of London.

Nevertheless, many of the public buildings and business offices are very large and imposing. The town hall, for instance, is the finest in Australia, and one of the largest in the world. The general post office also is a splendid building, but disfigured by empty pedestals, which were at one time filled with statues of great citizens.

The sculptor of these did not remember that the fashion of men's dress alters in the course of years, and the old-fashioned style of his figures seemed so comical after some time that they were the laughing-stocks of the town, and had to be removed.



SYDNEY

By permission of the New South Wales Government.

Government House, where the Governor of New South Wales takes up his residence, is a picturesque building in the Elizabethan style, surrounded with beautiful gardens stretching down to the waterside, and with a glorious view right across the bay.

It is a pleasing spectacle when the house is lit up with electric lights and the gardens illuminated with Chinese lanterns on the occasion of some festivity of the Empire, and when out in the harbour one may see the vessels outlined with their own lights gleaming through the paler light of the moon shining out of a clear blue sky.

Pleasure Resorts.

Sydney is well provided with parks, pleasure gardens, and promenades, and excursions may be made to many lovely spots along the creeks about the harbour, or to the woods which clothe the banks of the Parramatta and Hawkesbury rivers, which thread their way through the most beautiful scenery to the outlet of the sea.

"No city in the world," says a recent writer (Mr. Michael Davitt, in "Life and Progress of Australia") "is so well provided with places of pleasurable resort, and the people of Sydney make the most of the goods the gods have given them. Excursions, picnics, drives, outings, seem to go on all the year round; the winter in Sydney being in our summer months, and about equal to the weather we enjoy in April and May.

"The people impress you as a light-hearted, jolly, make-life-pleasant race, very fond of sporting, and given to gaiety, glad of any excuse for a holiday,



By permission of the New South Wales Government.

SYDNEY WATER-SUPPLY.

wishful to please the stranger, and opening wide for him the portals of a warm and whole-hearted hospitality."

The Climate of Sydney.

Unfortunately Sydney cannot pride itself upon a pleasant climate. In warm weather the atmosphere is heavy and depressing, so that strangers unaccustomed to it find it at times almost unbearable.

Then it is extremely uncertain, and is seldom the same for any length of time. Sometimes a cold rush of wind comes up from the icebergs of the southern seas—a "southerly buster," as the people call it—and often in the very same day it will be followed by a dead calm, which in its turn gives way to a hot, scorching wind, or storm accompanied by torrents of rain.

In the Streets.

The streets of Sydney are crowded with people from all parts of the earth. Round the harbour may be seen many Chinese shops, with their curious sign-boards hanging outside like a street in Hong Kong, and in other parts of the town are quarters where Japanese, Afghans, Hindus, French, and Italians are to be found, as well as large numbers of Jews. And one class of person which always attracts the attention of the stranger is the street loafer. Little groups of these people, some of them young and sturdy fellows who ought to be hard at work, and others old and ragged men, seemingly incapable of any work at all, lounge at the street corners, with hands in their pockets, pipes hanging out of their mouths, and hats tipped well over their eyes.

It is a puzzle to know how they live. They seem



Photo : Kerry & Co., Sydney.

OPHIR BLUFF NEW SOUTH WALES.

to be always waiting "for something to turn up," like one of the characters of Charles Dickens, but this something never seems to come.

The Young Australian.

But there are large numbers of very wealthy people in Sydney, and the true type of the young Australian in this town is perhaps the finest specimen of humanity in the whole world.

Many of them have been sheep-farmers in the great plains beyond the Blue Mountains, and an open air life has tanned their cheeks to a ruddy brown, filled out their chests, and made them tall and tough and strong, so that the very sight of them fills the visitor with a sense of admiration for "young Australia."

The homes of the prosperous business men in Sydney are very beautiful, and filled with every sign of refinement and luxury. Each house stands in a large garden, where the most wonderful flowers bloom nearly all the year round, so that it is very pleasant to take a walk through one of the suburbs.

The Blue Mountains.

In the holiday season, when the well-to-do people take the opportunity of seeking a more invigorating air than that in their own town, they wend their way to the famous Blue Mountains, which stretch like a gigantic rib parallel with the coast line, the nearest point being about thirty-five miles from Sydney.

The name of these mountains, which are from 1,800 to nearly 4,000 feet in height, is owing to the strange colour given to them by the atmosphere. It is said

to be caused by the vapour given off by the thousands of gum trees which cover the slopes of the hills.

As one ascends towards the summit, a blue veil of mist floats over the plains below, and wreaths about the dark forests of eucalyptus trees crowning the summits.

A railway leaves Sydney to a small, old-fashioned town called Penrith, and from this place a sturdy little train climbs up the steep mountain sides by a track called the Little Zigzag or by another called the Great Zigzag, from which names one can get an idea of the railroad that winds about, now this way and now that, in short, jerky twists and turns.

Three thousand feet up is the station of Mount Victoria, where a fine modern hotel has been built.

Here the railway ends, and after this the road to the summit becomes very steep. To the right the hills are covered with the golden bloom of the mimosa, and to the left the ground slopes down to green valleys. Here the climber scares the herds of kangaroos, which bound into the thickness of the forest as he approaches, with long leaps upon their hind legs, while the little ones peep from the curious pouches of their parents.

The Rock Caves.

At the foot of the Blue Mountains is the prosperous town of Wellington, and near by are the famous caves of Jenolan, in the depth of a valley through which the River Hawkesbury flows.

They were discovered by a man named Whelan in 1841, and contain many mazy passages and rock chambers, from the roofs of which hang a number of marvellous stalactites, some of them

measuring as much as eighteen feet, and being formed in the most fantastic shape.

In the flickering light of torches these caves seem like the rooms of some fairy palace, some of the stalactites resembling silken curtains hanging from the roof, while the floor gleams as if it were inlaid with precious gems.

They are many thousands of years old, and it is believed that at one time they were used as dwellings by the early men of Australia, ages before its discovery by Europeans.

Parramatta.

The first road made across the Blue Mountains from Sydney in the time of Governor Phillip runs through the small, old-fashioned town of Parramatta.

It is embosomed in leafy woods of gum trees, with pines, firs, and oaks, and the houses are surrounded with orange and melon groves, vineyards, orchards, and gardens, which make it a kind of earthly paradise in the summer season, when the blossoms scent the air for miles around with their sweet odours.

The Making of the Road.

The road which passes it on its way to the mountains was built by convicts, and quite recently there was a very old woman living who remembered the gangs of prisoners at work upon it. She related that the wretched men were treated like wild beasts, being flogged by their warders, while hardly a week went by without one of them being shot down or hanged on the branch of a tree for attempting to escape or for assaulting one of their guards.



Photo : H. King, Sydney.

ZIGZAG THROUGH THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.

It is not pleasant to think of the human suffering that went to the making of this road.

The Towns in the Plains.

At the end of it, on the banks of the Macquarie river, is Bathurst, a well-built town containing about ten thousand people. Beyond it are the Bathurst plains, rich in cornfields and fine grass-lands, where great flocks of sheep are grazing.

Sixty miles further on is Bathurst's rival, the town of Orange, with the suburb of Lucknow six miles away, where gold-mining is carried on.

Then away again the railway goes to Dubbo, eighty miles further, and to Burke, several hundred miles further west, and all the time the traveller sees on either side of him the vast estates of the Australian "squatters," as the sheep-farmers are called, where thousands upon thousands of sheep cover the grass-land like moving snowdrifts, and grow the wool which is the greatest source of wealth to New South Wales.

The Drought.

Unfortunately for this great industry, the climate of the province is very variable, and sometimes months go by without a drop of rain.

At these times the rivers, which in rainy seasons are broad and deep streams giving nourishment to the grass-lands through which they flow, become dried up into mere dribbling brooklets, and the hot sun pouring down upon the rolling pasture-lands scorches up the vegetation upon which the flocks depend for their life.

There is nothing more terrible than one of these



Photo : H. King, Sydney.

HIS MAJESTY'S MAILS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

long Australian droughts. The "squatters," some of whom own nearly 250,000 sheep on a "run" covering hundreds of thousands of acres, are powerless to save their poor animals from starvation, thirst, and disease.

The three years preceding 1899 were terrible times for the squatters. Nearly fifty million sheep died during the drought, as well as nearly 300,000 horses and 150,000 cattle.

The mere fact that the colony of New South Wales has been able to recover from this tremendous loss—which amounted to nearly £20,000,000 owing to insufficient rainfall—is a proof of the great energy of the people, and the natural prosperity of the country when the climate does not behave itself so badly.

The dangers from drought in the future have been partly prevented by wells—or artesian bores, as they are called—being sunk in the driest parts of the country, from which a good supply of water is obtained, and canals have been cut from the rivers through some of the pastures.

But even these precautions will be insufficient if any drought in the future lasts so long as that between the years 1896 to 1899.

On a Sheep-Run.

In times of prosperity the life on a sheep-farm is pleasant and healthy, though very monotonous.

The "squatter" is so called because in the early days of Australia the sheep-farmers pitched their camp, or, to use the slang word, "squatted," upon any grass-lands to which their sheep roamed in search of food. But nowadays, being generally a man of much

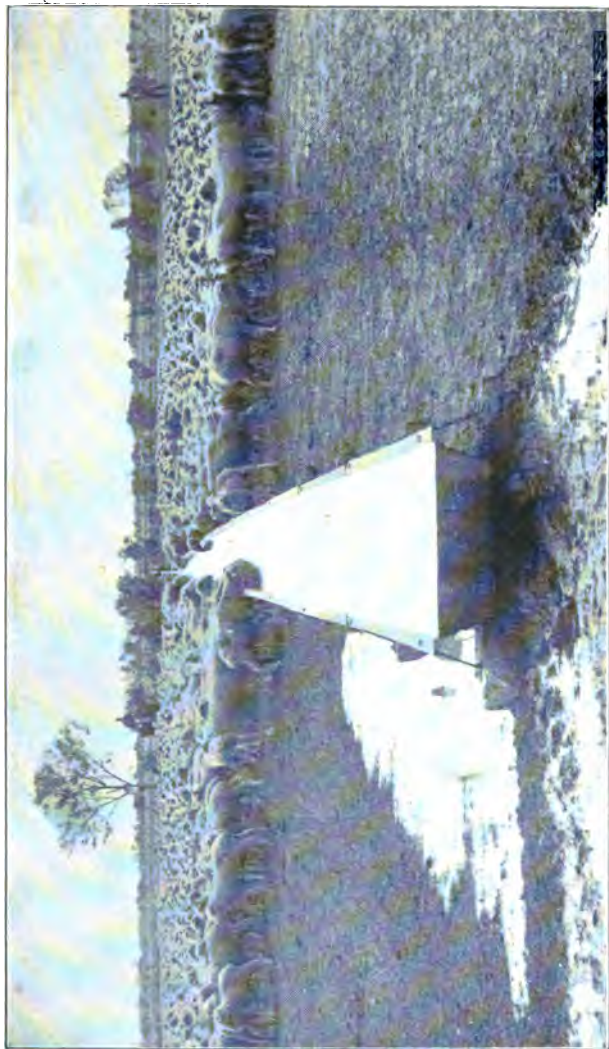


Photo : Kerry & Co., Sydney.
WATERING SHEEP IN THE INTERIOR FROM AN ARTESIAN BORE, NEW SOUTH WALES.

wealth, he lives in a fine house, well furnished, with every modern comfort and many luxuries.

In his service he has a small army of "boundary riders," strong, healthy young men, whose duty is to ride round the sheep-runs to see that no sheep stray out of bounds and that all goes well with them.

The Shearers.

The most exciting time of the year is at the "shearing."

The shearers who undertake this work do not as a rule belong to one farm, but travel about through the colony in the same way as harvesters in this country, getting jobs here, there, and everywhere, making the round of the shearing sheds.

The wages paid for this work are one pound for every hundred sheep sheared; and no shearer is considered "worth his salt" unless he can do his hundred between sunrise and sunset. The ordinary shearer therefore earns a pound a day easily enough, and many who are specially quick are able to get more.

One man is still famous in Australia for his prodigious skill. This was Jack Howe, of Warwick, South Queensland, who sheared 321 sheep in one day.

Of late years a machine has been invented which is doing away with the old hand-shearing, and takes the wool off the sheep closer to the skin. Of course, it is much quicker than the old style of shearing.

It is a thoroughly good time for the men while the work lasts. While riding from station to station they sleep out under the gum-trees in a little tent



Photo : Kerry & Co., Sydney.

A BOARD OF SHEARERS.

called a "matilda"; and it is a picturesque scene to watch them sitting round the camp-fire at night boiling their tea in "billy-cans" while the horses roam about the grass finding their own supper. The smoke from the shearers' pipes curls up into the still, warm air, and generally one of them sings song after song with a good chorus at the end of each, or tells a story of adventure which is listened to in silence until "turning-in time," when the men creep beneath the shelter of the friendly "matildas."

The Riverina.

The most fertile country of New South Wales is in the district called the Riverina, between the Murray and Macquarie rivers. It is divided into well-cultivated farms, where the fields at harvest-time are glorious with golden wheat, and the orchards are heavily burdened with splendid fruit.

In the spring the gardens in the prosperous little towns are a mass of bloom on the peach trees and oranges. In the sunshine of the Riverina the vineyards are equally luxuriant, and the best Australian grapes come from this district.

New South Wales is the most prosperous colony of Australia, and on its great rolling plains there is room for a great population, which in the course of time will no doubt come there to build up new homes and fortunes.

CHAPTER VIII.

VICTORIA.

MELBOURNE, the chief city of Victoria, cannot pride itself upon such a beautiful situation as that of Sydney. Port Phillip, on Hudson's Bay, as it is called, is a mere creek compared with the glorious harbour for which Sydney is famous, and the country around is flat, sandy, and unpicturesque. Melbourne is also different from Sydney in the plan upon which the town is built. It will be remembered that the streets of Sydney are crooked and straggling, as they followed the old cattle tracks in the early days of the city. But in Melbourne the principal streets are laid out in straight lines set at right angles, so that it is easy to find one's way about in a very short time.

Public Buildings.

There are some very fine buildings in this great and populous town, chief among them being the Melbourne Parliament House—said to be the handsomest building of its kind in Australasia—the two Cathedrals—the Anglican and the Roman Catholic—Government House, the Law Courts, the Town Hall, the Public Library, and the University. There are also many fine business houses in the chief streets. Unfortunately, however, these buildings often stand side by side with mean-looking and badly built houses, which spoil the general effect.

The Mint.

One of the most interesting buildings in Melbourne is the Royal Mint, where the gold brought from the bosom of Mother Earth in Australia is actually made into "the coin of the realm." This is a branch of the Royal Mint in London, and is managed by Government servants. It is not difficult for visitors to Melbourne to get permission to go over the rooms where the sovereigns and half-sovereigns are cast from their moulds and stamped with the head and seal of King Edward. There are many beautiful instruments used for this work, and one especially which almost seems gifted with brain power, as it weighs the sovereigns, and, while passing those of the proper weight, throws those which are a few grains too heavy on one side, and those a few grains too light on the other. Formerly, the Mint in London was the only place where sovereigns were coined, but now it leaves this work entirely to Melbourne and Sydney. If anyone will take the trouble to look at any of the sovereigns he is lucky enough to get hold of he will often notice a little *M* or *S* just under the King's head. These letters stand for Melbourne and Sydney, and show that the coin has come from one of those mints.

A City of Banks.

Collins Street, the principal business street of Melbourne, is lined on either side by great banking-houses. As Mr. Michael Davitt says: "You seem to see more banks than are met with in London, while they are certainly handsomer and more costly buildings. The great number of these institutions begets the impression that Australia is for good or evil the

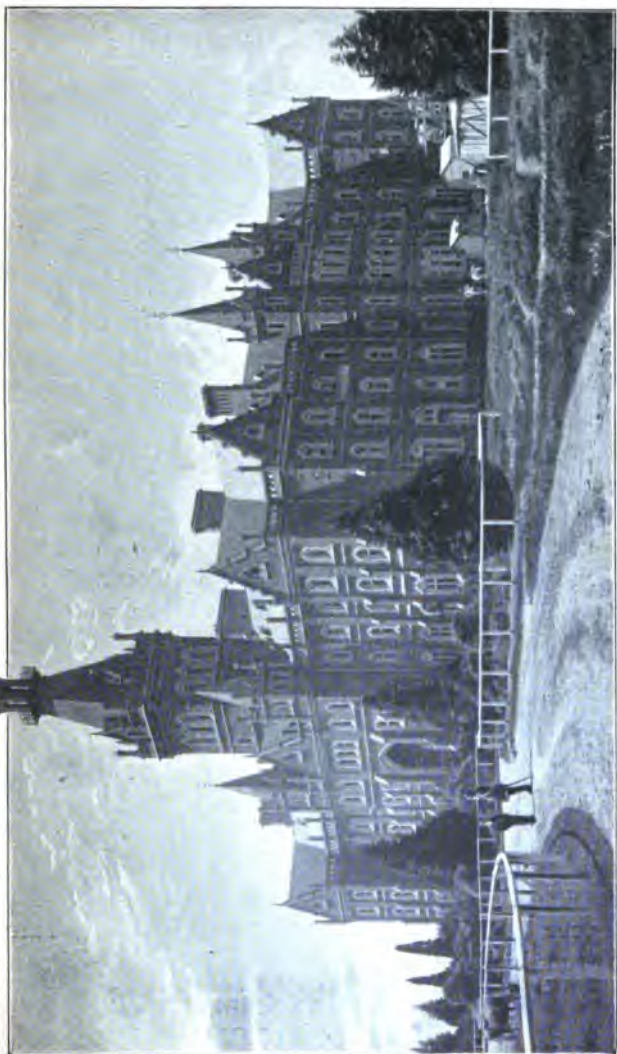


Photo : Cassell & Co., Ltd.

ORMONDE COLLEGE, MELBOURNE.

most be-banked country in the world, and you are inclined to think that there are enough banks in this one street alone to manage the money-changing business of the whole of Australasia."

The Suburbs.

All around Melbourne is a circle of smaller towns which are really a part of the great city, which, all together, cover the vast area of 256 square miles. Many of these small townships or suburbs are well-built and prettily situated, with fine parks and pleasure-gardens. The most important are St. Kilda and Brighton, which are healthy and attractive seaside resorts, where the wealthy people of Melbourne mostly reside.

The River.

A small river called the Yarra Yarra, which in the native language means "flowing, flowing," runs through the city, and in the suburbs it is a pretty and pleasing stream flowing between high banks shaded with willows, where the young men of Melbourne have built their boating houses, and exercise themselves by rowing matches.

But in the heart of the city it is ugly, dirty and evil-smelling, being poisoned by the chemical factories and warehouses upon its banks, so that very little notice is taken of it by the people of Melbourne. As one writer remarked, "You might live in Melbourne all your life, and hardly know that the Yarra Yarra was running by your door."

The Chinese Quarter.

There are large numbers of Chinese in the chief town of Victoria, where they take the place of



Photo : Cassell & Co., Ltd.

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA IN SESSION.

domestic servants, or act as labourers on the wharves. One of the most interesting parts of Melbourne is the Chinese quarter, of which Little Bourke Street is the chief highway. An evening walk in this neighbourhood is the strangest experience anyone may have, but no one should venture upon it without being guarded by two policemen at least, because, in addition to the Chinese themselves, it is the resort of thieves, cut-throats, gamblers, and all the most dangerous characters of Melbourne.

A street scene in this quarter is as picturesque as one in Hong-Kong or Shanghai. Paper lanterns swing in front of the shops, shedding soft-coloured light upon the people, most of whom are "Johnnie Chinamen," as they are called, dressed in the long blue coats and loose trousers, and wearing the dangling pigtail of their own country. In many of the shop windows are great China bowls with plants in them, and here and there one sees the hideous and grotesque figure of a Chinese "god." Generally in front of each of these monsters is a bowl of tea, put there as a religious offering by the superstitious yellow folk.

A Chinese Cook.

It is interesting to visit one of the Chinese cook-shops in this neighbourhood, and to watch the dough being rolled into long, thin ribbons, and afterwards chopped up into squares so exactly correct in size that it seems a marvel how such skill can be acquired. One man made the dough on a flat table and rolled it out by the yard an inch wide, another cut it into little squares, while a third filled each square with pork and folded it up into rolls. This is next put into the



Photo : C. Rudd, Melbourne.

COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE.

pot by the cook, and made into soup, which is said to be very tasty.

In the kitchen of the cook-shop the cook himself, lean and shrivelled-up as if he had been roasted at his own fire, stands by the side of his oven, and on the other side is a big boiler, with generally a whole pig carefully skinned and scraped hanging from an iron peg. On the ground there is always a low iron stove with a dish of tea standing upon it, served out to anyone coming in. It is worth drinking, for the Chinese are the only people who can make tea to perfection, taking it without sugar or milk.

Outside in the streets one sees the barbers attending to their customers, who sit in front of them silent and solemn, having their long pigtails unplaited and combed out, and then fastened up again into a kind of rope, which is generally increased in size by the addition of a coil of horse-hair.

Opium Dens.

In the alleys and courtyards of the quarter there are houses known as opium dens, which are crowded every evening not only with the Chinese themselves, but by English men, and, shame to say, by English women who have acquired the evil and terrible habit of opium smoking.

The horror of this vice is that when a person has once begun to take opium it is almost impossible to break himself of the habit, and he goes on and on until the opium deadens his brain and power, and dries up his blood so that he dies a kind of living death, becoming no better than a mummy even before the breath leaves his body.

Here is a picture of one of these evil places. It is a long, low room, lit only by a small flickering light at the far end, which leaves the rest in semi-darkness. By the side of this oil lamp sits a yellow-skinned, sunken-eyed Chinaman, holding a little saucer filled with a thick dark liquid like treacle. All round the room on the bare boards or perched up on shelves lie huddled-up figures, mostly Chinese, but with a sprinkling of villainous and sickly-looking Englishmen. Each of them holds a tiny pipe to his lips, but many of them are not smoking, and lie back in a kind of trance, with fixed, staring eyes, which seem to see nothing of what is going on around. The Chinaman with the lamp keeps taking a small quantity of the liquid in the saucer on the point of a needle, and, rolling it into the shape of a pea, holds it over the flame, turning it round and round while it frizzles and expands. Then he pushes it into the tiny pipe of anyone who calls for it, repeating the same thing over and over again all through the evening.

In the same district as these opium dens are the Chinese gambling houses or fan-tans, as they are called, where the Chinaman who works steadily enough all day goes to work himself into the fever of excitement by staking all his earnings in games of chance.

Here also come the lowest dregs of Australian humanity—thieves, swindlers, and outcasts of every kind—who find shelter from the law in the narrow alleys and dark courtyards of the Chinese quarter.

But it is not a pleasant side of the fair city of Melbourne, and it is time we left it to turn our attention to other sights and scenes of the colony of Victoria.

Ballarat, the City of Gold.

Let us go from Melbourne a hundred miles by rail, and seventy miles "as the crow flies," to that town of Ballarat to which in 1852 thousands of eager men tramped out with pick and axe greedy for the gold which was said to be in great nuggets beneath the grass on the quiet hillsides.

It is a city of broad streets lined with shady trees—oaks, elms, plane-trees, and blue gums—with fine shops, fine hotels, and imposing business offices, well-built churches, and charming residential houses.

Very different was it in the days before "the great gold rush." Where Ballarat now stands were lonely forests and rolling pastures, the latter being part of a great "sheep-run" belonging to some wealthy "squatters." Hardly a human form ever cast its shadow upon the land, except when a solitary shepherd rode the boundaries, or a wandering tribe of blackfellows passed that way.

It was indeed Ballarat, which, in the tongue of these blackfellows means "a resting place," but in 1851, when gold was discovered here by a man named Hiscocks in a little gully near a place called Biminyong, this peaceful spot became a place of uproar, and the hillsides were invaded by tens of thousands of people from all parts of the earth.

Their watch fires by night lit up the lonely forest, and their presence scared away for ever the dingo and the kangaroo, who once had roamed here undisturbed.

The Invasion.

Ballarat, "the resting place," was no longer entitled to its name. Those who came in the old digging days

came not to rest, but to work from dawn to sunset in search of the yellow metal which sometimes filled their hands at the first raking of the earth, giving them wealth beyond their wildest dreams, and sometimes evaded their grasp day after day, month after month, while they kept up their feverish search, falling into greater poverty and greater despair as the days passed. For so strange are the gifts of luck, that one man may get in a day what another will never obtain in a lifetime.

The Modern Town.

The finest street in Ballarat is Sturt Street, which runs through the centre of the town. It is wider than almost any street in the largest cities of the world, being two hundred feet wide from end to end. It is lined on either side by spreading trees, many of them being the sweet-scented eucalyptus, which in summer are covered with white blossom. These flowers, filling the air with rich and heavy odours, attract large numbers of parrots, who come wheeling down in large flocks, screaming noisily as they alight upon the branches, so that the trees seem in the distance to have suddenly burst forth into green, yellow, blue, and crimson flowers, so brilliant is the plumage of these beautiful birds.

Everywhere in Ballarat one comes across signs of the great industry which has made the town famous, that of gold-mining. Here and there are mounds of earth grass-grown and deserted, showing where the early diggers threw up the soil in their searches. Some, even, of the old wooden buildings which once stood at the entrance to the shafts are still left

standing, but tumbling to pieces and overgrown with weeds. Some of the waste grounds in the east part of the town look like great neglected graveyards, hundreds of small mounds being reminders of the days when the soil was turned over and over again, and searched and sifted for the yellow dust.

At the present time there are no independent diggers working on their own account, but all the gold-mining is undertaken by great companies, who have bought up all the mines where there is any likelihood of getting further supplies of gold.

As a matter of fact, there is still a lot of gold to be got out of Ballarat, and the city is tunnelled under by hundreds of miners working as the paid servants of the companies.

This frequent tunnelling has become dangerous to the foundation of the city in some parts, and some of the churches have actually dropped down several feet into the soil, and even collapsed entirely, owing to the sudden shifting of the earth.

The Lake and Suburbs.

The show place of Ballarat is a pretty piece of water called Lake Weendouree. It is only four miles long and one mile across, but the townsfolk are just as proud of it as if it were as big as Sydney Harbour, the first question to any stranger being always, "Have you seen our lake?"

It is somewhat curious that this water is on a higher ground than the greater part of Ballarat, and on a fine day a glorious view may be had of the surrounding country, though the town itself is scarcely visible, being built in a hollow.



Photo : Cassell & Co., Ltd.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN GEELONG, VICTORIA.

There are many prosperous little towns round Ballarat where gold mines are still being worked by shafts sunk to a great depth. The population of these places is composed almost entirely of the miners and their families—people very steady-going and respectable compared with the early diggers who first swarmed over the gold-fields of Ballarat.

Fifty miles away, to Ararat in a westerly direction, and onwards again thirty miles north to Maryborough, the soil is said by the miners to “smell of gold,” and along this line of country the richest mines of Australia have been found. As a rule, a gold-mining territory is on barren soil where the rocks appear through the thin crust of earth like the ribs through the flesh of a starving man. But in Victoria the soil is rich and fertile, and very charming to the eye.

Other Mining Towns.

The pleasant town of Ararat is built in a hollow, with hills rising all round it at no great distance, the tallest of them being Mount Mistake and Mount Ararat, which rise a few hundred feet above the other hilltops. At one time in the “fifties,” when the “gold rush” was at its height, many hundreds of miners became millionaires in the course of a few weeks on the fields of Ararat. The town boasts of having sent a ton and a half of gold under police escort to Ballarat every month during 1852 and onwards. Even now, although nuggets are no longer found on the surface of the soil, a steady supply of gold is obtained from the mines in this neighbourhood.

The towns of Maryborough and Bendigo, further

north, also owe their prosperity and importance to the mines being worked in the district. There are no less than two hundred mines round Bendigo, giving employment to nearly five thousand miners. Most of these mines belong to the business people of the neighbourhood instead of being in the hands of "Limited Companies," with head offices and directors in London, as unfortunately is the case with many of the Australian mines.

The Miners.

A large number of the miners are Cornishmen, and the rest are nearly all Irish. The former keep strictly to themselves in little "cliques," or clans, having as little to do as possible with anybody who does not hail from Cornwall, which they think is the finest place on the face of the earth. They are nicknamed "Cousin Jacks" by the Australians, because they all seem related to one another.

The wages of a regular miner are about £2 16s. a week, with an eight hours working day. There is another class of men, however, who do not work in the mines for settled wages, but spend their days sifting and searching among the old dust heaps where some fifty years ago the early miners in this region found their great nuggets. These men are called "fossickers," and they actually pick up small quantities of gold sufficient to repay them for the trouble of going over the mounds and hillocks cast up and sifted by other gold-seekers in days gone by

Other Industries.

The prosperity of Bendigo, however, is not founded only upon its gold. It has its iron

foundries, flour mills, and wine presses, from the last of which come some of the best Australian wines.

The colony of Victoria, as a whole, has great advantages over some of the other colonies owing to the cooler and more equable climate, which makes the danger of drought less probable and therefore encourages farmers in agricultural industry. Indeed, although, as in New South Wales, a great many sheep and cattle are reared, the tendency in late years has been to devote the land to wheat-growing and vineyards. As regards the latter, more than a million and a half gallons of wine are produced every year.

The colony has an area covering nearly 88,000 square miles, and is therefore about equal in size to England, Wales, and Scotland. Immense as it is, it is the smallest of all the Australian colonies, but on account of the industries and advantages I have mentioned it is one of the most wealthy and important, and its prosperity is steadily increasing.

CHAPTER IX.

QUEENSLAND.

THE colony of Queensland covers a very large area, extending for 1,300 miles from north to south and 900 miles from east to west, with a coast line of 2,500 miles. The climate and the character of the land is one of great contrast in different parts of the colony, the northern portion being hot and dry, with long stretches of sandy desert, where there is little prospect of cultivation, but the south having rich and fertile soil resembling the colony of New South Wales. The country of the Darling Downs, extending for 70 miles by 30 miles, is well watered, and its green and beautiful grass-lands roll in long wavelike stretches of splendid pasture, reminding the Englishman of the Sussex Downs at home. It is the great cattle- and sheep-ranch of the colony, and about 200,000 cattle and 3,000,000 sheep are nourished on these downs.

Here also, as the years pass on, thousands of acres of grass-land are being turned into cornfields, prosperous fruit-farms, and mixed farms of wheat, oats, potatoes and barley, as well as dairies, where, besides the great supplies of milk sent into Brisbane and other towns of the colony, enormous quantities of butter and cheese are made and exported to other parts of Australia and to foreign markets.

Brisbane.

Brisbane, the capital town of the colony, contains about 100,000 people. Although it has not the magnificence of Melbourne, it is a fine city, and can justly pride itself upon one of the finest streets, namely Queen Street, and some of the most imposing buildings in Australia.

It stands about twelve miles from the sea on a bend of a small river of its own name, and is now and again troubled by serious floods, in which the tide overflows the river bank and swamps the low-lying ground about the town. Some years ago a curious incident happened, which is still remembered, in connection with one of these disastrous floods, a British gunboat being swept right into the Botanical Gardens, where it remained high and dry when the flood abated, until, by an extraordinary coincidence, a second flood arrived unexpectedly and floated it off again.

The above-mentioned gardens are one of the glories of Brisbane, being wonderfully luxuriant and beautiful. The whole city, indeed, is full of trees and sweet-smelling shrubs and brightly coloured flowers.

But the greatest pride of Brisbane is in the beauty of its girls, a beauty which has become a proverb in Australia, and better even than the flowers of the city gardens are these bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, healthy and graceful maids, who make the streets of Brisbane gay with their presence and their merriment.

The Gold of Charters Towers.

As in New South Wales and Victoria, it was gold was the prime cause of Queensland's quick

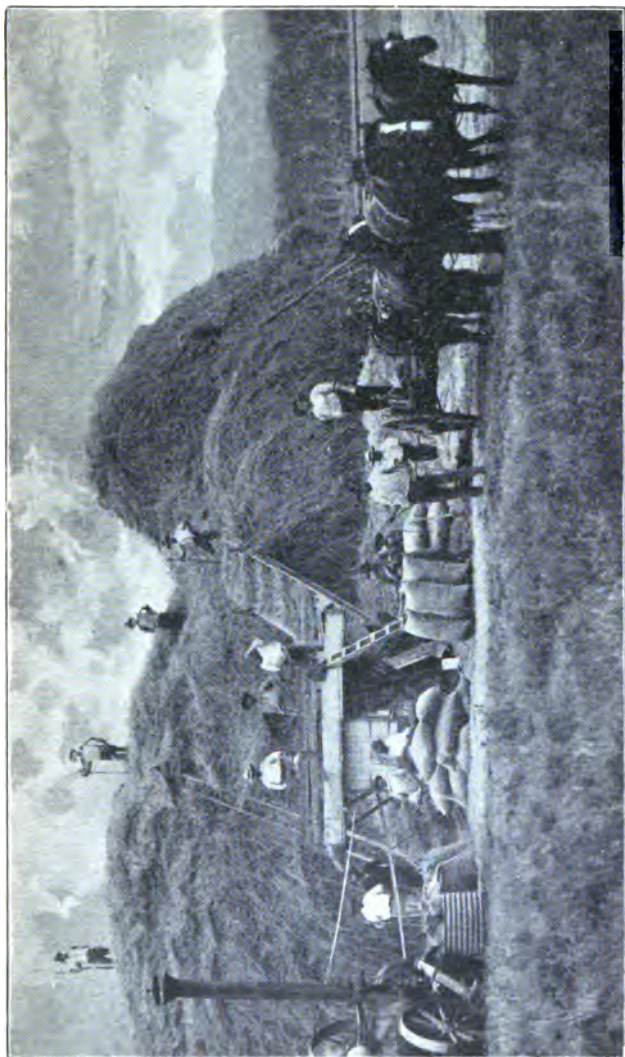


Photo : Will Stark, Beaudesert.

HARVEST HOME ON THE DARLING DOWNS.

prosperity, and at the present time it is still a great source of wealth. The chief gold-field surrounds the town of Charters Towers, a comparatively small place containing 20,000 inhabitants, nearly all the men being miners. It was a blacksmith named Stutley who first discovered this great gold region. He made a big fortune in quite a short time, and then, like many another lucky miner cleverer at finding than at keeping, he went off and quickly squandered his money away in gambling and riotous living. Then, beggared of his last coin, he came back to his old gold-field to look for another fortune, but death overtook him on the wayside; and this man, who might have been a millionaire with all the power that money brings, was found lying in tattered clothes in a ditch.

Since 1872, when the blacksmith made his first discovery, £14,000,000 worth of gold have been taken from Charters Towers. The supply is by no means exhausted, and the wages paid to the miners working in this district amount to £13,000 weekly.

The Mount of Gold.

Scattered about the colony there are other gold-fields scarcely less rich in mineral wealth, such as those of the Gympie, Palmer, and Hodgkinson "fields," as they are called. Even now new gold mines are being discovered and great fortunes made by lucky prospectors, or goldseekers.

Some years ago, two of these men named Morgan, wandering about in search of the precious metal, put up for the night at a farmer's named Gordon, who lived on a hill now called Mount Morgan, after his

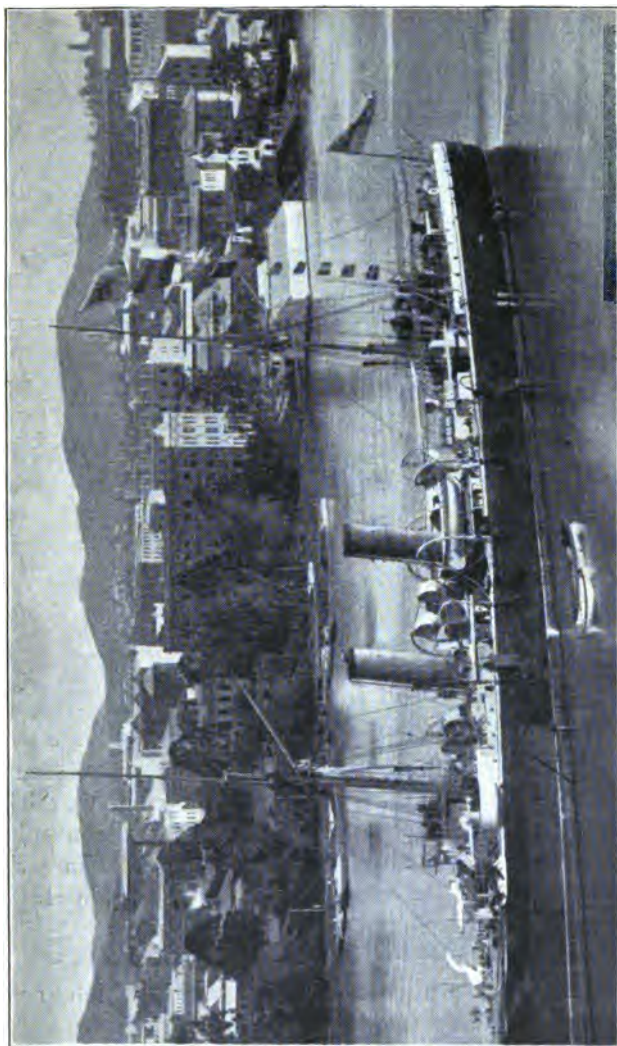


Photo : A. Lowe & Co., Ltd., Brisbane.

H.M.S. WALLAROO LYING OFF BRISBANE.

two guests. The farmer had the idea that the hill contained copper, and asked the two Morgans to make investigations. To their joy, however, they found traces of gold, and, coming back, offered to buy the farm at the price of £1 an acre. Gordon readily agreed to this, thinking himself lucky to obtain the money, never dreaming of the vast riches he was parting from so easily. But the Morgans, borrowing some money to buy machinery, set quickly to work, and in a short time turned up an immense quantity of gold. From being almost penniless they became millionaires, almost before they had time to realise their good fortune.

From that time to this the gold mine of Mount Morgan has yielded a continual supply, at the rate of about £300,000 yearly. A thousand miners are regularly at work upon this hill of gold, and at the bottom of the Mount a prosperous little town has sprung up.

Frozen Meat.

The colony of Queensland is famous for its great industry of frozen meat. Every year about 700,000 cattle and 3,000,000 sheep are slaughtered, divided up, and frozen for export to England, Austria, South Africa, Japan, and other Australian colonies. The traveller through Queensland marvels at the number of freezing works and meat stores dotted along the line of coast, telling of the great trade being carried on.

Boring for Water.

The northern part of Queensland, which, as I have said, does not possess the same rich soil as the south, was for a long time considered unsuitable

for cultivation on account of its small and uncertain water supply.

The wonderful discovery has been made, however, that far down beneath the earth is a great lake of pure water, which if it could be pumped up to the surface would convert the barren soil of a great uncultivated region into a fertile country where every kind of agriculture could be successfully carried on. This has been attempted by boring artesian wells straight down to an enormous depth into the earth, some of them reaching down to 5,000 feet.

So successful have these experiments been that four or five wells now give nearly four million gallons every day, the total supply of water from all the wells made up to the present amounting to about two hundred million gallons in twenty-four hours. Small canals have been made for miles across the land, down which the water runs, giving the much-needed moisture to the fields.

There is no doubt that when a large number of these artesian wells have been "tapped," as it is called by the engineers, the northern regions of Queensland will be hardly less fertile than those in the south, and the prosperity of the colony will be still more advanced.

Among the other profitable industries of the colony, one must include those of coffee-planting and sugar growing.

The Native Labourers.

Unfortunately, many of the Australian sugar-planters have earned a bad name for themselves for the way in which they have at times obtained the

services of their labourers, called Kanakas, brought over from the Polynesian Islands to work on the plantations.

There are very few white people who can be induced to work for small wages among the sugar-canes in the full heat of the sun, and if the sugar industry is to succeed in Australia it seems probable that it depends upon the planters being able to obtain native labourers of the kind I have mentioned. But it is one thing to invite natives to come to Australia for the sake of fair wages, and another to force them to do so, willy-nilly.

"Blackbirding."

Unfortunately not many years ago it was the custom for the Australian planters to send out vessels to cruise among the Polynesian Islands, and to kidnap as many healthy young men as they could lay their hands on. These expeditions were known as "blackbirding," and many cruelties were undoubtedly inflicted upon the peaceful though uncivilised islanders, who were torn from their families and taken into exile.

In 1881 Sir Arthur Kennedy, the Governor of Queensland, wrote: "I have never concealed my opinion of the traffic in Polynesian savages, and I feel assured that scandals exist which do not reach the public. . . . I have had many years' experience in the West African slave trade and the Chinese coolie trade, and I cannot divest myself of grave fears that the Polynesian labour trade partakes of many of the evils of both."

The British Government appointed a Royal

Commission to enquire into this question, and when it was proved that large numbers of the Kanakas had been forcibly kidnapped the planters were compelled to return them to their native shores.

Enlisting Recruits.

At the present time the old system of "blackbirding" or kidnapping is done away with, and instead of this the Kanakas are supposed to be enlisted as free recruits who know exactly what their work will be, and how much they will be paid for it. A ship which goes in search of recruits is always accompanied by a Government officer, who is supposed to understand the native language sufficiently to explain all these things to the islanders.

Some people, however, who have examined this question say that the recruiting is done chiefly by bribing the natives with cheap presents, and that they have but little idea what is in store for them when they arrive at the cane-fields.

Be that as it may, however, the Australian Government does its best to safeguard their interests, and appoints inspectors to visit them on the plantations and see that they are properly treated, and that they are allowed to return to their islands if they desire to do so.

The Kanaka "Boys."

The new "boys," as the Kanakas are generally called, are paid a wage of £6 a year, with a house, food and clothing.

As regards the "house," it is nothing more than a small shed in which a donkey might be kept. Th

food is good and ample, consisting of a liberal supply of meat, bread, rice, potatoes, and sugar, together with one and a half ounces of tobacco, representing the luxuries of life. The clothing consists of two suits of working clothes for each year and a pair of blankets. If at the end of three years, which is the first term of service, a native labourer agrees to work for another three years, he receives £12 in wages for every year he stays.

The Kanakas are strong, well-built people, with intelligent and good-looking faces. As a rule they are peaceable and well-behaved, but they do not seem to be very happy in their life on the plantations, and have none of the merriment and contented good humour which negro races generally possess. They are very fond of music, however, and when the day's work is over amuse themselves by playing concertinas, banjos, and other simple instruments.

Some of them, however, are more savage in character and habits, and quickly fall into such vices as drunkenness, which they learn, alas! from white men who call themselves civilised. Some of them come from islands where cannibalism is not unknown, and it happens now and again that their savage passions break loose, and horrible murders are committed by these labourers on the plantations.

It is a pity that the sugar-planters still consider it necessary to employ these black people in Australia, because it would be very much better if the work could be done by the Australian people themselves. Opinions, however, are divided as to whether this is possible, owing to the danger to white people of

working among the sugar-canes in the heat of the sun.

The Barrier Reef.

Off the coast of Queensland, at a distance from the shore of ten to a hundred miles, and extending for a long line of over one thousand miles along the coast, is a chain of coral islands known as the great Barrier Reef, formed by the countless skeletons of those beautiful and wonderful little deep-sea animals called corals, mixed with sand and limestone, and baked by the sun into one mass of hard, glistening rock, which few people would imagine could be formed in this extraordinary way.

The great Barrier Reef of Queensland cannot be crossed by ships of any kind, and is indeed an impenetrable barrier protecting the coast of Australia. Before its position was marked on the charts for the use of seamen there were many disastrous shipwrecks, but now every captain navigating a vessel in Australian waters has a full knowledge of its dangers. Between the reef and the shore the water is quite smooth, and sufficiently deep to allow of the largest vessels sailing through this ocean passage of a thousand miles in length strewn with little coral islands.

Sailing among the Coral Islands.

"A sail through the passage by moonlight," writes Mr. Michael Davitt, "is an experience never to fade from the delighted memory. To the west you see the moonlit summits of the hills, like so many, ghostly sentinels standing guard over the shore; the islands reposing on the waveless waters around you and

bathed in the soft beautiful light of the starlit sky, while away to the east you imagine you hear—but it is only a fancy—the booming of the breakers against the distant reefs, as if the sea were singing a siren song of enchantment to lure us to where many a ship has dashed herself against the coral breastwork that guards the coast of Queensland against the Pacific Ocean.

“There is no other coastal scenery in the world to equal this in changing vistas of loveliness and grandeur. You move along in endless windings in and around the islands of coral, their silvery sands and grassy slopes and wooded vesture of varied foliage. I journeyed by night in one trip and by day in another, through this enchanted world of coral islands, and had a double enjoyment of its scenic glories. The islands are clad with pine trees and the jungle growth of the tropical climate in which they lie, while the ships go so near to the coast, now of the mainland, now of some island, that you can throw a stone from sea to shore with ease.”

The Need for Colonists.

The Government of Queensland is very anxious to attract hard-working people from Great Britain, whose population is so large that many may be spared, in order to develop further the natural resources of the colony.

Vast tracts of land are still uncultivated, where thousands of people might establish prosperous farms, thereby building up little fortunes for themselves as well as increasing the trade of Queensland. In this country land is enormously dear, but in Australia a

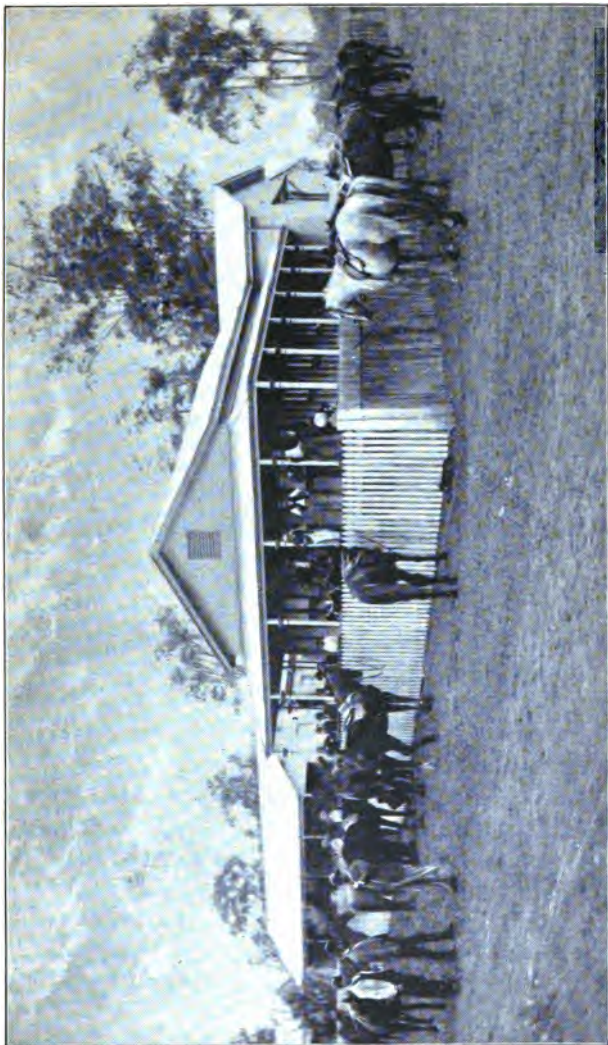


Photo : Will Stark, Beaudesert.

COURT DAY IN QUEENSLAND.

man may have as much as he can manage for the asking. The great need of Queensland, as of other Australian colonies, is men of industry and determination, who will build their houses in the great rolling plains which at present are lying idle and uncultivated.

A Colonial Advertisement.

The following leaflet, published by the Agent-General for Queensland, is an interesting example of the way in which the Government of that colony is endeavouring to attract people from our overcrowded country to the new lands of the west.

"More People Wanted for Queensland."

"Free passage for farm labourers and single women (domestic servants). Assistance towards actual money cost of passage is now granted by the Agent-General of this British Colony to farmers, dairymen, market gardeners, orchardists, etc., and their families, where they may obtain freehold homes in a sunny land.

"The Queensland Government is now granting free passages to farm labourers. Single men must be between the ages of 17 and 35, married men under 45. Must be ploughmen, shepherds, and generally competent farm-labourers or servants. Single women (domestic servants) must be between the ages of 17 and 35, and of good character. An application form must be filled up and signed.

"Each applicant must be approved by the Agent-General, and when approved for a passage will be

required to pay £1 for a ship kit. This becomes the property of the passenger. Persons obtaining one of these free passages will be sent to the colony by splendid mail steamships as ordinary third-class passengers. Nothing to pay back at any time; the great demand for farm and female labour being the cause of this absolute gift by the colonists of Queensland to a few hard-working British people.

“The demand is kept up by the farm-labourers of to-day becoming the farmers of to-morrow. And in the case of single women through a large proportion leaving their situations to get married.

“Wages are high, land cheap, provisions abundant. Life is better and brighter and more hopeful for the wage-earner than in England.

“More farmers are wanted to grow crops, especially wheat and barley, for which there is a market on the spot, Queensland not producing half enough for her own consumption.

“Population, total, 500,000 people, about half as many as in Liverpool, one English town. The people are mainly British. English character, English laws, customs, money, weights and measures. One hundred and sixty acres freehold can be purchased at 2s. 6d. an acre, payable in yearly instalments of 6d. an acre each year for five years. Single farm servants get £35 to £40, married couples up to £75 a year and all found; female domestic servants from £20 to £75 a year with board and lodging. Nothing to pay back. Persons obtaining a free passage are entirely free on arrival. Free to work at what they please, where they please, and for whom they please. . . . Only vessels of the very highest class are engaged by the

Government to carry these passengers. It is the safest and pleasantest journey in the world."

And so the advertisement goes on describing the glorious prospects for new settlers in the colony of Queensland. These golden hopes are somewhat exaggerated, perhaps, but every year shows an increase in the prospering population of the colony.

CHAPTER X.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

THIS great colony is the largest of the five colonies of Australia, being 1,500 miles long and 1,000 miles broad, with a total area of nearly twenty times the size of England.

And yet the whole population of this vast land is only equal to the inhabitants of one middle-sized town in England.

The Great Desert Lands.

Unfortunately, it is not like the colonies of New South Wales or Victoria, and the greater part of Queensland, where what soil still remains uncultivated is only awaiting the industrious hands of new settlers to be turned into fertile farm country. But the central regions of Western Australia are composed of great stretches of sandy or stony desert, offering no welcome to the man in search of profitable ground.

In the dry season the rivers become mere dribbling streamlets or disappear entirely, being evaporated by the hot rays of the sun. And the only water in the midst of the great deserts are several shallow salt lakes which only mock the traveller's thirst.

The Mirage.

Or worse still, perhaps, to the daring adventurers who set out to explore these desert regions in search

of gold or for the mere purpose of map-making, they see in front of them that deceitful, yet wonderfully beautiful sight, the "mirage," which seems to promise them all the joys of fresh, pure water to drink and to bathe in after the agonies of thirst and heat in the glare of the desert sun.

"As I look ahead and around," writes one such traveller, narrating his experiences,* it "seems that there is plenty of water everywhere in the distance. There are long lines of glittering waters, with the trees dipping into them and casting reflections. In part the ground looks swampy, with reeds growing amidst it, and the fences growing out of it, and here and there hills rising up. Two or three miles off, at the furthest, they seem. The sky is filled with white masses of clouds, and the sun shines straight through them upon those quicksilver sheets."

"It is only near to us that the ground seems to be bare and grassless; away over before us we must ride into good ground—that is, if we can push our way through these vast lakes.

"'What lakes are those we are coming upon?'" I inquired of my guide.

"'No lakes at all,' he replies.

"'But I see them plainly—don't you?'"

"'Yes, but look behind,' he replies with a laugh.

"I look behind; and there they are, on all sides gleaming across the barren land we have ridden through, with the same appearance of foliage and grass, and hills rising out of what I knew were flat plains.

* Mr. Hume Nisbet, in "Cassell's Picturesque Australasia,"



Photo : Gresham & Evans, Perth.

JARRAH WOOD IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

“ ‘The mirage!’ I cry out with astonishment.

“ ‘Yes,’ he answered grimly. ‘We see them every day, and don’t notice them until our attention is directed to them by a new chum like you; and at night, as you will see, where they now gleam white, they glow on all sides like lakes of flame. See that nearest patch? If you watch it closely you will see it gradually vanish while we ride into it.’ ”

“ I look steadily upon the nearest line of glistening water. It crosses the base of a rounded hillock. . . . As I watch and ride nearer it gradually grows softer and more mist-like; the hill becomes smaller, until when we are about a quarter of a mile from it the hillock has dwindled down to a flat plain, and the water gone out like a puff of steam; and so on beyond us spread sun-lighted lakes, and as we near them they drift out, leaving more still beyond, and only a dead, black, earthy desert under our horses’ hoofs.”

West Australian Trees.

In spite of these great deserts of Western Australia, in the south-western part of the colony there stretch vast forest-lands equal in size to the whole of Great Britain, and immensely valuable for their almost inexhaustible supplies of timber.

Many of the trees grow to a prodigious height and are very peculiar, because the trunks tower straight up without a branch and with no foliage except at the top, where a scanty head-piece of leaves gives the barest shelter from the sun.

These karri trees, as they are called, are among the largest in the world. They have a smooth, whitish bark, which, curiously enough, peels off every

year. On an average they grow to about 200 feet in height, and reach about 150 feet before the first branch stretches out from the trunk. But in the Warren River district and other parts some of them are as tall as 300 feet, and are nearly thirty feet round the lower part of the trunk.

There is a record kept in Australia of one great giant of the forest which, being hollow at the base, through being eaten by ants, fell down, and was used as a dwelling place by a woodsman and his family.

Another kind of Australian tree is the jarrah, or mahogany, which only grows to about 50 or 60 feet high, but is very valuable for the quality of its timber. It has a rugged bark, something like the English oak, and its leaves are so dark that a forest of them has a very gloomy appearance. One quality makes it much favoured by Australian colonists, namely, that the white ants of those regions, which eat their way into every other kind of tree and crumble it into dust, are unable to sharpen their teeth in this tough mahogany wood.

The soft, sweet-smelling, smooth-grained sandalwood tree, so valuable for making furniture, jewel-boxes, and artistic articles of all kinds, also grows in large numbers from north to south of West Australia.

Forest Scenes.

Marcus Clarke, one of the most distinguished of all Australian writers, has described the characteristics of these forests in a beautiful passage worth remembering.

“The dominant note of Australian scenery,” he says, “is a weird melancholy. The Australian

mountain forests are funereal, secret, stern; their solitude is desolation. They seem to stifle in their black gorges a story of sullen despair. No tender sentiment is nourished in their shade. In other lands the dying year is mourned. The dying leaves drop lightly on his bier. In the Australian forests no leaves fall. From the melancholy gums strips of white bark hang and rustle."

And another and more recent writer—Mrs. Campbell Praed, in her delightful book, "My Australian Girlhood"—gives another impression of these great trees.

"I know nothing so strange in its way," she writes, "as to travel for days through endless gum-forest. Surely there never was tree so weird as a very old gum, with its twisted trunk, the withes of grey moss which hang from its branches, and the queer protuberances upon its limbs, in which wild bees hive. It was a great thing when we camped out if the black boys found and chopped down a 'sugar bug' so that we could season our damper with native honey.

"A white gum has spotted, scaly bark; from a red 'iron-bark' the gum oozes and drops like congealed blood. Then see the odd, expectant way in which the tree will slant along the side of a ridge, and the human look of its dead arms when it is one that has been 'rung' or blasted by lightning!

"There is nothing pretty about a gum-tree. It seems to belong to antediluvian nature. Often a laughing jackass, the big kingfisher of Australia, is perched in the fork of a bough shrilling its devilish merriment, or an iguana will be dragging its unwieldy

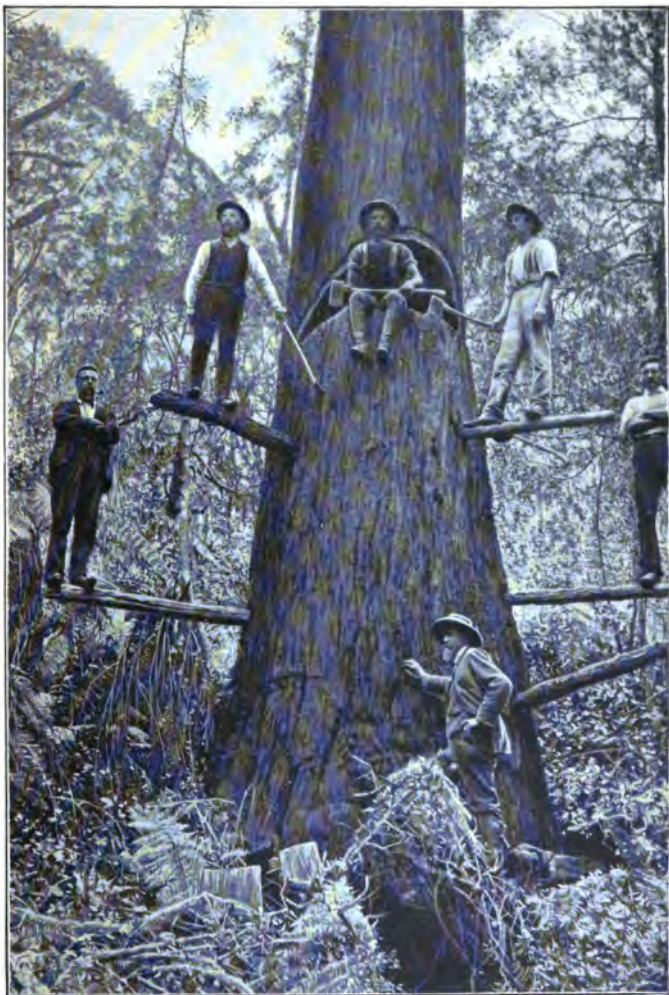


Photo : Kerry & Co., Sydney

FELLING A FOREST VETERAN.

length up a trunk—a land crocodile which seems antediluvian too; as does a kangaroo which may be starting upon a series of eccentric boundings, its uneven legs and long tail flapping in the air, with perhaps a baby marsupial peeping from its pouch.”

Gold.

West Australia was the last colony to be invaded by the gold “rush,” and it is within quite recent years—not further back than 1892 to 1896—that an army of eager, poverty-stricken, travel-stained, half-starved men pressed onwards across the deserts of West Australia, having come right across the continent, hungry for the gold which was said to line the earth of the colony, which up till now had been left a desert wilderness.

The road through the bush country towards the fields of Coolgardie, where a gold reef had been found, was but a rough track with great ruts, in which waggon wheels stuck fast at frequent intervals, and in 1893, a remarkably wet season, it was a mere swamp of mud and slush.

Through this floundered great cartloads of flour and whiskey, each drawn by a team of a dozen horses in single file, or by a span of oxen, and each surrounded by gangs of men on foot, known by the name of “swampers,” who paid thirty shillings for the privilege of trudging along by the side of the waggon for ten days at a time, and having their “luggage” (consisting of picks and shovels and a supply of tinned food) carried on top of the load to the extent of a hundredweight. Hundreds of men

who had been unlucky on the mining camps of New South Wales and Victoria packed their stores into a one-wheeled cart called a "Kimberley wheelbarrow," and set out on their long march. One German actually stowed a supply of food and a few tools into a flour-barrel, and, putting an axle through it to make a rough kind of wheel, rolled or dragged this extraordinary machine the whole way to Coolgardie.

As a proof of the tremendous rush to West Australia it is sufficient to say that the population of Perth, the capital of the colony, was 9,000 before the gold discoveries, but now contains more than 40,000 people.

The Coolgardie Mines.

The first great discovery of gold was made by two men named Bayley and Ford in July, 1892, who were prospecting in the neighbourhood of Coolgardie, now an important little town, 240 miles east of Perth, where they came across a very rich reef, afterwards known as Bayley's Reward Claim.

No less than half a ton of gold was taken from this mine during the first year of working, and for several years the supply seemed inexhaustible.

Another rich gold-field was discovered later at a place called Kalgoorlie, and this is now the chief centre of the gold-fields, and the best gold-producing mine of Western Australia.

Gambling in Gold Mines.

These discoveries created an immense excitement not only in Australia, but in the whole of Western

Europe, and especially in Great Britain. People in this country who had saved up a little money were seized with the gold-fever, and eagerly bought up shares in gold-mining companies, hoping to make big fortunes.

In very many cases, alas ! they not only failed to make a fortune, but ruined themselves utterly.

"Mining Experts."

Unscrupulous City men bought up fields in the gold-mining districts, and sent out mining "experts," as they called themselves, to report upon the prospects of obtaining gold.

These men were paid big fees, and the more glowing their report was the bigger fee they got. They knew perfectly well that what was wanted from them was a favourable opinion of the quantity of gold in the mine, and in nine cases out of ten they said exactly what their employers wished. If they saw a grain of gold it was magnified by words to make it appear a nugget.

If the mine happened to be in the neighbourhood of another which had yielded a large supply of gold, that was sufficient for these "experts" to pronounce an opinion that there was every prospect of the new mine being equally valuable.

With these highly coloured reports in their possession, the City gentlemen then started to "float" their company, as it was called, selling shares in the mine to those people who were excited by the flattering prospects and eager to invest their money.

Meanwhile, away out in Australia, a small gang of miners would be working away at the company's mine,

not caring very much whether they found gold or whether they did not, so long as they were paid good wages, and being shrewd enough to learn very soon that they might as well be digging sand at Ramsgate as looking for gold where they were.

Ruin for Shareholders.

After a while the news could no longer be kept back from the unhappy shareholders that the gold-mine into which they had put their money was not "a paying concern."

The company would then be wound up, as it is called, and many a poor widow woman who had invested all her little income, and many a struggling man who had scraped together a few pounds by great self-sacrifice, found themselves stripped of every penny.

But the City gentlemen generally made a good thing out of it, and the "mining experts" had got their fees, so that, one mine having failed, they set about to "float" another.

Melancholy Relics.

Relics of these disastrous mining ventures may be seen in some of the ruined villages scattered about the goldfields of West Australia.

A place called Southern Cross, on the track to Coolgardie, is one of these dismal remembrances of failure.

Not many years ago thousands of men rushed here with the gold fever upon them, and then deserted it when their hopes were unrewarded. Now nothing

is left but rotting wooden shops, rusty iron-built hotels and restaurants, and the tumble-down, deserted streets, made all the more melancholy by the boastful names by which they were called—such names as “Pleiades Square” and “Constellation Street,” as if the glittering golden nuggets which the miners hoped to find were as plentiful as the stars in the sky.

Profitable Mines.

Nevertheless, in spite of the many unprofitable mines which were explored and then abandoned by gambling and swindling companies in London and elsewhere, the soil of Western Australia has already given forth enormous quantities of good gold, and there is no doubt that it will continue to do so in the future.

From the Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Ivanhoe, Lake View, Great Boulder, and other mines, over seventeen tons of gold, equal in value to £12,250,000, have been produced since 1892.

Better also than the gold has been the number of new settlers, among whom there were many who, having been first attracted to Western Australia by the golden glitter, turned their energies to the development of farming and fruit-growing, catering for the wants of the increasing population.

It is now time to say a few words about the two chief towns of the colony.

Perth.

The capital is Perth, standing on the beautiful Swan River, about twelve miles distant from the sea-coast.

The city is built on a spur of land jutting out into the river, and gradually sloping upwards to a hill, upon which the Catholic cathedral stands out, a splendid landmark for the surrounding country.

From the hill one gets a wide and sweeping view of the river winding its way to the sea, with its port of Fremantle, and away from the land to a cluster of little islands, whose green trees make them seem in the distance like emeralds set in silver, or, when the sun is shining upon the ocean, in gold.

Perth possesses some handsome buildings and fine streets, but on the whole it is not a well-built town, the highways being narrow, and many of the houses small and mean-looking.

The Suburb.

Very pretty, however, is the suburb of Perth, a village called Guildford, which is not unlike the English town of that name, though smaller. The river, lined on either side by shady trees, winds beneath a rustic bridge, and leads to quaint brick-built cottages, surrounded with well-kept gardens stocked with bright flowers, and gathered round a village green, exactly like an old-world English hamlet.

The Seaport of Albany.

Albany, on the small harbour within the shelter of King George's Sound, at the southernmost point of the colony, is the first port touched at by sea-going travellers to Western Australia.

Here all the European mail steamers bring and take away their passengers and their letters.

The great hope of the citizens of this "port of

call " is that one day the Government may be induced to make it the capital town of the country, instead of Perth, on account of its better position.

There is no doubt that it is likely to be one of the most important towns in this part of Australia, because King George's Sound, which is the gateway to the port, is a splendid shelter for ships, and is capable of holding the greatest fleet afloat.

The climate is cooler than in other parts of the colony, and work is therefore carried on under more favourable conditions.

The chief industry of the town at the present time is done by its sawmills, where the timber from the great forests is made into planks for building purposes, and chopped up for sending out to other parts of the world.

Pearl-Fishing.

On the northern coast of the colony pearl-fishing is a great and profitable industry.

The pearl-fishers, who dive to the bottom of the sea in search of the shells in which the beautiful little beads are found, are mostly South Sea Islanders, and are paid enormous wages—as much as £40 to £50 a month—for their difficult and perilous work.

As a rule, they wear a proper diving-dress, with rubber clothes, and a helmet provided with an air-pipe. But others dive below just as they are, and remain an extraordinarily long time below without breathing, some of them being known to hold out as long as four or five minutes before being hauled up.

The diver in full costume, however, can stay below some eight hours at a stretch. He is screwed into

his dress and helmet, heavily weighted with lead to make him sink, and then lowered by ropes to the bottom of the sea. When he reaches the bottom he communicates with those above him by means of his life-line and code of signals, indicating whether he wants more or less air, whether the vessel is to stand still or to drift.

He carries his life with him every day, for there is also danger of the air tube getting twisted round a rock or reef in a tangle which baffles the efforts of the diver, and in that case there is no hope for him.

Perils Beneath the Waters.

One diver, in the face of this frightful peril, saved his life by cutting the tube and then stopping the air-hole with his hand. He was drawn up insensible, bleeding at nose and ears.

Another diver who, intent upon the shells, had forgotten to look ahead and got entangled in a rock, became confused, took the wrong turn, and so fastened himself beyond escape.

Those above, seeing the uselessness of trying to hoist him up, cut the tangled line and sailed away. Next morning they returned to look for the body and recover the dress.

The first diver who went down very soon gave the signal to haul up, and when he appeared was in a state of great excitement, saying the body was still alive.

Believing it to be an evil spirit, he refused to go down again. However, after a time he consented, on condition that someone else went with him. The owner of the boat donned a dress and dived down

with him, to find the body of the poor fellow seated bolt upright on a rock, with knife in hand, as if he were defending himself from some sharks that were swimming about him.

Under the water things are magnified greatly, and this, added to the huge and unwieldy dress, made the dead diver appear to be of gigantic proportions, while the eddies caused the body to sway to and fro. It must indeed have been an awful and terrifying sight, and it is no wonder that the other diver should have been greatly scared.

Sharks.

Curiously enough, the divers have but little fear of the sharks which abound in these waters. It seems that these monsters are alarmed by the appearance of the men in their strange dress, and it is an almost unheard-of thing for a diver to be attacked by one of them unless he has been careless enough to let his clothes get greasy, in which case the sharks may be attracted towards him.

Very large sums of money are paid for the best specimens of pearls, and the colony of Western Australia owes some of its increasing prosperity to the courage and skill of the divers.

CHAPTER XI.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

THE title of South Australia for this great colony is very misleading and almost ridiculous, because it stretches right across the vast island-continent from Cape Northumberland, which is one of the most southerly points of Australia, to Coburg Peninsula in the extreme north.

The reason for its having been given this name was on account of the early settlements being made at Adelaide and other places in the south, when the country northwards was unexplored, and a mere blank space upon the map.

Adelaide.

Adelaide, the capital town, sometimes called "The City of Churches," is situated at a distance of seven miles from the coast on the River Torrens, which flows into the sea at St. Vincent Gulf.

The country around the city is a broad and fertile plain, bounded on the north by a chain of hills rising like a great wall, defending, as it were, the approach to the interior of the colony.

In the early days this was a real barrier to the north, but now a railway climbs the hills, and carries the traveller towards the great lakes, which lie in the midst of a sandy desert.

A Boundary of Park-lands.

When Adelaide was first designed, its builders had the happy idea of surrounding it with a circle of park-lands half-a-mile in width, which will always remain a green belt round the city, affording a beautiful and healthy boundary to this capital town of the colony.

They have been reserved for the perpetual recreation grounds of the people, and although here and there a big public building has been established, partly used for the purpose of clubs and meeting halls for the citizens, no private house will ever be allowed to be erected. The suburbs of Adelaide—many of which have been named after the suburbs of London, such as Islington, Norwood, Kensington, and Brompton—have therefore been built on the other side of the park-lands.

A Well-designed City.

Adelaide itself is a well-designed and well-built city, with broad thoroughfares crossing at right angles, and divided at intervals by fine spacious squares. On each of the four sides of the city facing the park-lands a noble terrace has been built, with the houses only on one side, the other side being the open park.

In North Terrace stand the Parliament Houses, the Governor's residence, Adelaide University, and the Exhibition buildings which were erected in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee at a cost of £50,000. They are now used as a museum and picture gallery.

Facing the East Terrace is the race-course, with its grand stand.

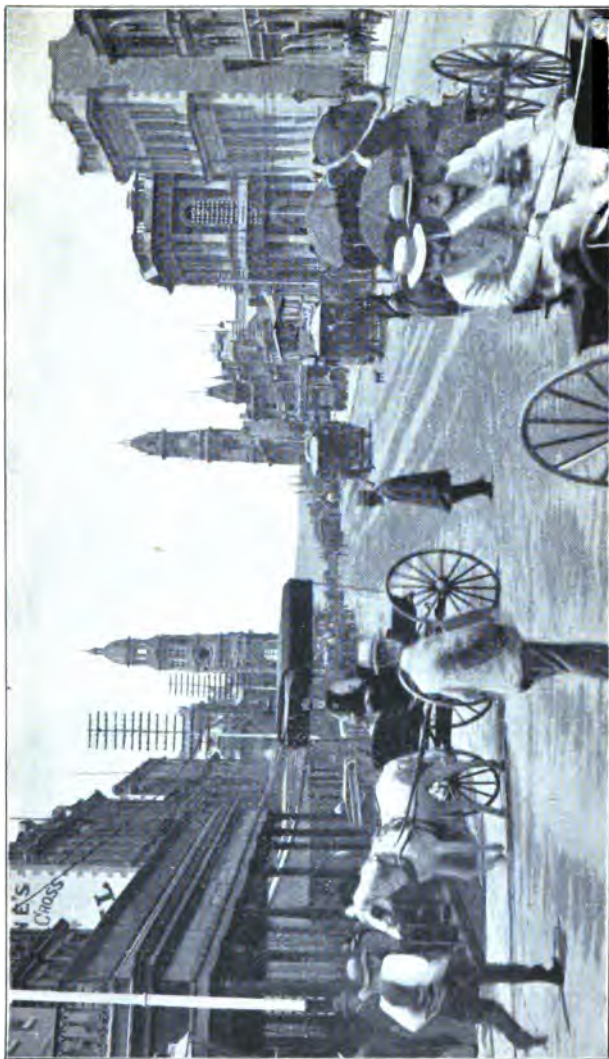


Photo : Cassell & Co., Ltd.

KING WILLIAM STREET, ADELAIDE.

Mr. H. G. Turner, a well-known Australian writer, says: "The view from the East Terrace is probably the finest in the city, and many of the houses upon it are indicative of the wealth and taste of their owners. The ever-varying light and shade which animates the picturesque outlines of the Mount Lofty ranges facing this terrace (some miles away) is a continuous delight to the eye.

"The dark foliage of the olive plantations, contrasting with the brighter green of the orange groves; the sombre eucalyptus and the verdant clumps of English trees, the brightness of the freshly-growing crop, shaded off into the darkness of the adjacent gully, and the park-like aspect of the intervening land, makes up a picture of simple Arcadian beauty. To those accustomed to the Yankee-like stir and bustle of Melbourne, it seems incredible that such a peaceful panorama can be enjoyed within almost a stone's throw of streets that rival some of the shop-keeping centres of trade in the capital of Victoria."

Public Buildings and Gardens.

The principal public buildings of Adelaide, such as the Town Hall and the Post Office, are situated in King William Street, and in all parts of the city there are many large churches, belonging to every kind of religious belief that one may find in England.

The pride of Adelaide—for each of the capital cities of Australia has some special pride of its own—is in its beautiful Botanical and Zoological Gardens, which cover an area of 130 acres, very skilfully laid out with fountains, lakes, and pleasure gardens, and containing many luxuriant tropical plants.



Photo : McGaun, Adelaide.

CHILDREN'S DEMONSTRATION AT ADELAIDE.

Climate.

The climate of Adelaide is, on the whole, a pleasant one, but in the summer months—the Adelaide summer being in October, November, and December, it is very hot, the temperature often reaching 110 degrees in the shade. But it is a dry heat, and therefore not so exhausting or enervating as in regions where the earth gives up great moisture.

Colonial Cornfields.

For hundreds of miles to the north of Adelaide the land has been turned into great cornfields and grazing lands for cattle and sheep. South Australian wheat produces a very fine quality of flour, which obtains the highest prices in the markets of Europe.

The Horrors of Drought.

Unfortunately, however, the colony suffers from the great curse of Australia, an insufficient water supply, and during recent years there has been a terrible drought, which has greatly reduced the quantity of wheat grown by the farmers, as well as destroying many thousands of sheep and cattle.

"No more desolate scene can be imagined," says Mr. Percy Rowland, in his book, "The New Nation," "than a sheep station in such a time of drought. Upon the vast suffering herds—the station is, perhaps, the size of an English county—the sun blazes continually. Every vestige of grass has long been burnt away.

"Look to the horizon in every direction. You will see nothing but the long, brown, sun-baked plains,

broken here and there by a starved eucalyptus, spreading its dry leaves to the metallic glare of the sky, or perhaps, ring-barked by the squatter, spreading its white, unsightly limbs in invocation to the merciless gods, a praying corpse.

“Morning after morning the fiery globe of flame rises through cloudless air; night after night it drops in crimson behind the scorching plains. Feebler and feebler grow the sheep; miserably bleating they wander, mere skin and bone, till they can no longer move; here and there, one by one, they sink down exhausted. Now is the crows’ opportunity; hovering over them in obscene squadrons, day after day, biding their time, at length they dart down at the poor creatures’ eyes, and first pecking them out, tear the skin from off their quivering backs before life, and the capacity for suffering is at an end. A day or two more, and the sun flashes on thousands of bleaching skeletons, rejoicing to have completed his work. Then, perchance, the long-looked-for rain will come in torrents, and sweep in sudden floods over the devastation the drought has caused.”

Artesian Wells.

Something is being done to remedy this terrible state of things by the sinking of artesian wells.

The reason why South Australia suffers so much from drought is because there are no great mountain ranges to store up the rainfall in the form of snow, which during the summer months would be melted and find its way to the parching plains. But when the rain pours down it is sucked far down below the surface of the soil into the sponge-like earth beneath,

where it sometimes forms great underground rivers which find their way to the sea.

It is to reach this water that the artesian wells are being bored far down into the earth, and when once the shaft is sunk to the depth of these underground streams, hundreds of thousands of gallons may be pumped up every day, to quench the thirst of the dry plains.

It is upon the multiplication of these wells that the future prosperity of South Australia, as well as of Queensland, largely depends.

Favourable Prospects.

Apart from the drought, the climate and soil of South Australia are very suitable to the cultivation of the vine, and there are now nearly 18,000 acres of vineyards in the colony, producing excellent red wines.

Australian Wine.

It is only in recent years that the South Australians have succeeded in obtaining the favour of foreign countries for their colonial vintages, but they now find good and increasing markets, and about 300,000 gallons of wine are sent over every year to this country alone.

Olive Oil.

Another source of prosperity to the colonists is the growth of the olive-tree for the production of olive oil.

Italy at one time was almost the only country in which the trade was established, but now the Australian olive oil successfully competes with its



By permission of the New South Wales Government.

SILVER-MINING AT BROKEN HILL.

Italian rival, and is even finding its way into Italy itself—another example of “sending coals to Newcastle.”

Gold and Copper.

The gold-fever has never yet seized South Australia so completely as the other colonies, and it so far owes but little of its prosperity to mineral wealth. In the north, however, there is a gold region which is being profitably worked, though without any sensational discoveries, and in the south some of the richest supplies of copper in the world have been discovered. The copper mines of Burra Burra, Wallaroo and Moonta, are famous for the enormous quantities of this valuable metal which they have yielded since their discovery.

Silver.

A few miles over the border of South Australia, on the New South Wales side of the mountain chain called the Barrier Ranges, is the Broken Hill Silver Mine.

To all practical purposes it belongs to South Australia, all its silver being taken by train to Adelaide, and all the miners' wants being supplied from the South Australian side of the mountains.

Broken Hill and Silvertown.

There are two towns on the silver-fields, Broken Hill and Silvertown, both well-built modern places, whose interests are entirely devoted to the mining industry which gives employment to many thousands of men.

The silver was first discovered in the year 1883

by the boundary rider of a sheep station, named Rasp. He communicated his discovery to the public, and since the year above mentioned, more than £15,000,000 worth of the white and precious metal has been extracted from the district of Broken Hill.

The Central Desert.

The centre of the great colony is and will probably always be a vast desert-land parched by the sun, and unsuitable for cultivation.

Across its solitary tracks the famous explorers of the past, Eyre, Stuart, and Macdonell, made their way with splendid courage in the face of hardships and suffering from heat and thirst and all the dangers of a desert journey, such as few men could survive.

But the result of their expeditions was only to reveal the barrenness of the interior, and its absence of all prospects for colonisation.

CHAPTER XII

THE NATIVES OF AUSTRALIA.

THE black people to whom Australia belonged before white men had discovered the great island-continent are rapidly dwindling away, and at the present time there are only about 70,000 of them remaining, whereas there were at least twice that number when the British colonies were first established.

The Passing of the Blackfellow.

There is no doubt that in the days of these early settlements of English farmers and miners the black people were looked upon in the same way as wild animals, and were often hunted and killed without mercy. This was sufficient to reduce their numbers considerably.

But they had worse enemies than the white man's bullets, and this was the white man's whiskey. The blackfellows, as they are called, who settled down peaceably as farm-labourers, shepherds, or servants of the "squatters," learnt the habit of drinking their master's "fire-water," and drunkenness became a common vice with them. This and other habits they picked up from the white men, brought with it the penalty of disease, and at the present time numbers of the Australian natives die very rapidly of consumption.

Men of science say that the Australian natives are different in many ways from all other uncivilised races.

Although called "blackfellows," the colour of their skin is not actually black, but is rather of a dark coffee-stained shade. As a rule they are as tall as the average European, but slim in body and with very lean legs, without any appearance of good calves. The native is by no means handsome, having a long forehead sloping backwards, a broad, flat nose, a big, ugly mouth, and high cheek bones. His hair, which is generally greasy with oil, is soft and glossy, and one peculiar thing about him is his habit of rubbing his body with fish oil, which gives him, in the words of William Shakespeare, "an ancient and a fish-like smell."

Intelligence and Humour.

• It is often said that the Australian aborigine, or native, is the lowest type of savage. But this is by no means the truth. He is, in fact, gifted with great natural intelligence, and when sent to school is very quick at learning, being almost if not quite on a level in this way with English school-children. Then, too, he has a wonderful sense of humour, which is always a sign of intelligence.

As a distinguished Australian writer says: "Their perception of the ridiculous is exquisitely keen. A cow tumbling head over heels across a log in the long grass, a man looking for a pipe which he has got in his mouth, or a dog in search of food upsetting something on its own head and running away with nothing after it, will make a black fellow laugh for a

week afterwards whenever he thinks of it. Nothing with the ghost of a joke in it escapes him, and finer shades of humour that are entirely lost upon many well-educated whites will be instantly and thoroughly appreciated by him."

One of Nature's Gentlemen.

"We had a blackfellow on the station," writes Mr. Finch-Hatton, "by name Wakarra, who was as pleasant a companion for a day's ride as could be wished.

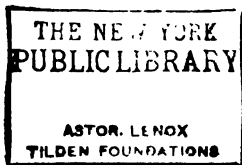
"It is not too much to say that his manners were those of a perfect gentleman. No amount of hurry ever made him forget himself for an instant, no scolding made him sulky, and no kindness made him disrespectful. The graceful ease with which he used to remove his battered hat to any ladies that happened to be staying on the station, was a sight that might have moved an Old Country swell to tears of admiration.

"He learned to read with ease, and had a most surprising faculty for asking questions. One day he wanted to know how the sun set and rose. I explained to him that the earth went round, which he understood perfectly; but when I told him how fast it went, he thought for a bit, and asked why the trees and houses and things did not fall off!"

This intelligent native, however, was one upon whom some pains had been spent in educating him. It must not be thought that all the Australian black-fellows are so good-mannered or civilised.



AUSTRALIAN NATIVE WOMAN AND CHILD.



A Wandering Life.

Most of them have a rooted dislike to settled work of any kind, or to staying in one part of the country. They wander about in tribes, having no interest in life except to get food for themselves and their families, and to shelter themselves from bad weather.

This business is not so easy as it may seem.

In a wild country, with wild animals, it takes the utmost cunning and courage of a savage to preserve himself from starvation. He must make himself weapons with which to kill his prey, and must be practised in all the knowledge and skill of hunting.

In both these things the Australian savage shows his intelligence. He is the only one who has learnt to make and throw that wonderful weapon called the boomerang. This is a flat stick three feet long, and curved at the centre, and when thrown in a peculiar way it cuts through the air with a zigzag movement of great force, returning again to the hand of its owner.

In addition to this weapon they also have flint-headed spears, a heavy club-stick called a "nullah-nullah," and stone hatchets. The bow and arrow are unknown among them.

In tracking down his prey the blackfellow is without a rival. Even the North American Indian, whose hunting craft we have all read about in the stories of Fenimore Cooper and Mayne Reid, is not so cunning in creeping silently through the forest, or so bold and swift in running a wild animal to bay. A white man on a horse, with a good rifle beneath his arm, finds it very difficult to bring down a kangaroo which has once got a good start ; but a blackfellow on

his own legs, with no weapon but his throwing stick, will make a good dinner of the poor jumping Jack.

The Blackfellows' Food.

This curious long-legged creature is the chief source of food to the still uncivilised blackfellows, in addition to the ostrich-like bird called the emu, with the small, boar-like animal called the wombat, and the squirrel-like creature, the opossum. They also eat lizards and snakes, frogs, insects' eggs, white ants, and moths, generally roasted over a wooden fire, for which a light is produced by rubbing together two pieces of stick.

Then the blackfellow, to keep himself healthy, requires a certain amount of vegetable food.

This has to be provided by his wife, whom he calls his "gin." Woe-betide the unfortunate gin who cannot keep her lord and master well stocked with leaves of the grass tree, roots of wild yam, seeds of acacia, and other vegetable dainties!

Savage Customs.

The blackfellow believes in strict discipline for women-folk, and maintains it by beating his poor gin with his "nullah-nullah," or even gashing her with his knife. This cruel treatment is so customary that it is a rare thing to see an Australian "gin" without showing signs of bruises and cuts.

Uncivilised Habits.

The blackfellow is, in fact, a very hard-hearted person, and he has a nasty way of abandoning his old

father and mother to die of starvation in the Australian bush when he or she becomes a burden to him. On the other hand, he is a devoted father himself, and often when a boy-child dies a parent will mourn for it bitterly and passionately for years.

These wandering tribes have no settled dwelling-places, and build themselves human nests made of twigs and leaves or grass, which they abandon by moving on to some other part of the bush, where they make similar shelters for as brief a while.

Want of Thrift.

The blackfellow has one great failing, which is the cause of needless suffering to him—that is, a lack of thriftiness. He has not learnt the lesson of the squirrel, which hoards up a store of nuts at their time of ripening to provide him with food through the winter.

The consequence is that the Australian savage waxes fat in the summer and autumn, when the leaves and fruit are upon the trees, but in winter and early spring he is often in a state of semi-starvation.

Yet his wants are few compared with those of civilised man. He does not have to worry over tailors' bills or the latest style of fashion. In summer he goes without any clothing at all, and in the winter wraps himself in kangaroo skins.

The Feast of the Bunya.

Once a year the blacks have a great feast. This is at the time when the bunya tree ripens and bears fruit.

It is a kind of fir tree, spreading out with broad

branches at the bottom and gradually tapering up to a point at a height of about a hundred feet from the ground, in the shape of a candle-extinguisher. The fruit is a nut about the size of a date, with a strong flavour.

When it is in season several tribes of blackfellows will gather from various districts and assemble at some part of the bush where the bunya trees are best found. After feasting for some weeks upon the coarse, full-flavoured nuts, they are always seized with a craving for food, and then woe-betide the squatters' sheep and cattle!

In the old days, before white man's law could be enforced with the same strictness as nowadays, the end of the bunya feast used to be the signal for a fight between the blackfellows, those who were killed being roasted and eaten.

A Corroboree.

Or the assembled tribes would hold what is called in their language a "corroboree," meaning a religious ceremony in which the "wise men" of the tribe would give forth their teaching and commands.

At these times it was not unusual for several of the "gins" who had offended their husbands to be offered up as a sacrifice to the evil spirits which the blackfellows believe to rule the world. They, too, would be roasted and eaten by the cannibal tribes.

Fortunately human sacrifices are no longer committed, and if the blackfellows cannot obtain sufficient kangaroo or 'possum meat after a bunya feast the worst they do is to kill and eat the cattle of a squatter in a lonely region of the bush.

It was such thefts of cattle which so angered the early colonists against the blackfellows, and was the cause of the horrible murders and massacres which took place between black men and white, neither side showing any mercy to the other when they had a chance of revenge.

It is not often that a European is allowed to witness the ceremony of a corroboree. But among those who have succeeded in doing so is Mrs. Campbell Praed, the distinguished Australian novelist, who, when she was a young girl, crept out of her father's house towards the blackfellows' camp and watched the strange performance as she crouched beneath some sheltering undergrowth.

Here is her account of what she saw :

An English Girl's Narrative.

"The fires burned at regular distances, and in rows of three or four deep there were gathered, in line, first the naked forms of many warriors, pipe-clayed and painted, their heads bristling with parrot and cockatoo feathers, their necks wreathed with rush beads, their spears brandished above their heads; then the old men, and behind them the gins, who kept up a monotonous, discordant chorus to the accompaniment of a kind of tom-tom, and a few Jew's harps, and the beating of boomerangs and waddies.

"Now the chant dies in a long wail, now it swells into a fierce shout of triumph. The chiefs in the front seem to direct the performance. Some of them are painted to represent skeletons, others in spiral stripes, as though huge snakes were coiled round their bodies. They wave their spears and utter harsh cries.

Presently a little party of braves steps into the arena. They hold their shields in front of them, make sinuous movements, glance from one side to the other, vigilant and cunning, stoop as beneath imaginary doorways, and whisper together.

"Clearly it is the rehearsal of a night attack upon some white man's station. Then there is a dash sideways upon a cluster of mock sleepers, who rise with drowsy gestures, give signs of horror and alarm, and after offering a feeble show of resistance, beg for mercy. A pantomimic struggle follows. Spears are pointed, nulla-nullas aimlessly hurled. The gins break their chant with infuriated yells. The circle closes in, the old men clash their boomerangs together in time to quick music, and the gins sway to and fro in a sort of drunken ecstasy.

"Then the dance begins. More logs are thrown upon the bonfires, which blaze up high, and the whole scene is a lurid terror. The black forms thread the flames, bending this way and that in rhythmic motion, and the maddened faces with distended eyeballs and glistening teeth are as the faces of demons.

"Now the chant becomes slow and mysterious, as if it were an invocation. There are three wild shouts, and four or five rude effigies of women, made of saplings, and draped with red blankets, are dragged into the circus and stood upright. They are saluted with screams of horrible laughter, and the warriors painted like skeletons mock them with gestures of derision. They are thrown down, stamped upon, and beaten with nulla-nullas, and at last hurled upon the central bonfire. The boomerangs clash louder, the saturnalia is fiercer. But I feel faint and sick, for I



Photo : H. King, Sydney.

AN AUSTRALIAN CORROBOREE

feel convinced that a human sacrifice is about to be offered, and I turn and flee."

A Mysterious Ceremony.¹

The blacks are supposed to have no real religion. They believe in demons and spirits, and look forward to a new life after death, when blackfellows will rise up white and "live happily ever afterwards."

Yet it is probable that they do not let their European masters know all that they think and do with regard to religion. They have, for instance, one mysterious ceremony called the bora which no white man has ever seen, and which the blacks themselves will never talk about except to those of their own race. Not even the women of their tribes are allowed to be present when they perform this mystery.

It is supposed to be a kind of baptism of the young men who are found worthy to enter the rank of warriors, and are afterwards called "kippers." Before the ceremony takes place these young men have to lie alone in the bush, fasting, and testing their courage by hardships of the body.

The bora is always held in a solitary spot, far from white men's dwellings, and generally upon the top of a hill. A large circle is scooped out and guarded by a wall of earth with an opening on each side. The youths who come up to receive the rank of kipper go in at one entrance and out at the other when the ceremony is performed. In the centre of the circle there is the figure of an emu roughly made out of twigs.

So much has been learnt, but the real meaning of

the ceremony, and the actual performance that takes place, is still unknown to Europeans.

Even blackfellows who have become civilised, and who are easily persuaded to talk about the customs of their tribe, will only shake their heads and look very solemn when they are questioned about the bora, protesting that if they told a word about it they would be killed by their brethren.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW ZEALAND, AND ITS NATIVE PEOPLE.

THIS great British colony in the South Pacific Ocean is often called "The Britain of the South," because it is so curiously like our own country in scenery and climate.

Like the British Isles, it consists of two large islands (with a smaller and unimportant one adjoining) standing out in the sea 1,200 miles away from the great continent of Australia. Its coast line is rugged, and numerous harbours have been made by the sea beating against its cliffs.

England in the South.

Although its scenery is in many parts wilder and more picturesque than our own, yet there is also a great part of New Zealand which bears a striking resemblance to the British Isles. As a well-known writer has said :

"In New Zealand everything is English. The scenery, the colour and general appearance of the water, and the shape of the hills are very much like that with which we are familiar in the West of Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. The mountains are brown, and sharp, and serrated, the rivers are bright and rapid, and the lakes are deep and blue, and bosomed among the mountains.

“If a long-sleeping Briton could be set among the Otago hills and told on waking that he was travelling in Galway or the West of Scotland, he might easily be deceived, though he knew those countries well.”

“Made in Britain.”

One of the reasons why New Zealand is like our own land is because British plants, trees, and animals flourish there just as well as in their old home, and most of them have been established in the colony by British settlers.

Captain Cook introduced pigs into the islands, and they soon increased in great numbers, roaming about the country in a wild state.

Then the early colonists brought over not only the usual domestic animals like the horse, cow, and sheep, but also the deer, hare, and rabbit, many kinds of English birds and fish, and even the honey-bee and other insects.

So well have these thrived, that some of them have become a positive danger. Rabbits especially have increased in such prodigious numbers that they destroy large crops and are a perfect pest to the farmers, so that they cost over £100,000 a year to keep in check.

The Maoris.

The native people of New Zealand, the brave and intelligent Maoris, did not always belong to the land where they are now settled.

Eight centuries ago, or about the time when the Normans were conquering our Saxon forefathers, they came across the sea from one of the Polynesian

islands in the South Pacific Ocean. They came, like the Danish Northmen to our own shores in the time of Alfred the Great, in long rowing boats, sweeping through the sea with the measured strokes of fifty pairs of oars.

They were good fighting men then, as now, and conquered the race of savages living at that time in New Zealand, of which people we know little, for they have left but few descendants.

Of those distant times there are many old legends and poems, telling of the great and warlike deeds of the conquering tribes—seven in number, and each named after the great double canoe in which the warriors came over—which are still recited and sung by the Maoris at their feasts.

Their Personal Appearance.

These people cannot with any accuracy be called black men. They are dark-skinned, it is true, but not so dark, for instance, as an inhabitant of southern Italy.

They are a well-shaped race, the men being equal to the average height of an Englishman, though with somewhat shorter legs, and very muscular. The hair is usually black, but sometimes dark brown, and generally the men have but little or no beard.

With a powerful face, bright eyes, a large though well-shaped nose, full lips, and white, regular teeth, the men are rarely quite ugly, and often really handsome. The women have large, fawn-like eyes, and long hair of a finer texture than the men, while their features and expression make them exceedingly



Photo : Burton Bros., Dunedin.

A NEW ZEALAND VALLEY

good-looking in their youth, even judged by English style of beauty.

But this comeliness soon passes off, partly owing to hard work, partly also because many of them tattoo their lips with a blue colour, which, in the opinion of Europeans, spoils their good looks entirely.

A Race of Warriors.

When the Maoris had taken possession of New Zealand, and killed or conquered the original natives of the country, their warlike spirit and the jealousy existing between the various tribes led them to fight continually against each other.

When Captain Cook discovered New Zealand and explored its coasts, he found a war raging from end to end of the islands, and carried on with great fierceness.

The Maoris looked upon battle as the one test of manhood, and the means of earning glory. They fought with heavy clubs and spears of wood and stone, and were very skilled in making earthworks to defend themselves from their enemies.

Their chief weapon was a short club of stone called a "mere," and this was often handed down from father to son through many generations, and was looked upon as a sacred possession, to be guarded even at the risk of death.

Cannibalism.

In days gone by, it was their custom to eat the bodies of warriors whom they killed or captured in battle, and they believed that by doing so the strength and courage and skill of the dead man passed into their own persons.



SCENE IN A MAORI VILLAGE.

Photo : Burton Bros., Dunedin.

When British colonists came to settle in New Zealand, the Maoris refused to give up their lands or to live in peace with the white men, and in 1846 a war broke out between the natives and the colonists, which lasted for twenty-three years, at the cost of terrible bloodshed upon either side.

The horrible custom of cannibalism which the Maoris had practised in the olden times was always a terror to English soldiers, and they preferred to die on the field of battle rather than to fall alive into the hands of their enemies. It is probable, however, that the custom had almost died out before the war broke out, and the soldiers' fears of being tortured and eaten were therefore unnecessary.

The Chivalry of War.

It is, indeed, wonderful to learn with what splendid heroism and chivalry this warlike people fought against us. Many true tales are told of their noble generosity to white men.

In one skirmish, for instance, they captured a young British officer named Lieutenant Philpotts, who had fought with great daring and courage, but instead of putting him to death they expressed their admiration for his bravery, and not only set him at liberty, but returned him his pistols and sword.

At another time, a Maori chief learnt that General Cameron's force, which had been sent out to fight him, were short of provisions, and that the soldiers were nearly starving. Not taking advantage of this fact to gain a victory by attacking famished men, the noble warrior-chief sent down the river a number of canoes laden with a large supply of food for our soldiers.



BURIAL OF A MAORI CHIEF.

In the whole history of warfare there has been recorded no more splendid act of chivalry than this.

For the Fatherland.

Although, too, they fought us stubbornly, and killed in battle nearly a thousand British soldiers, we can feel nothing but admiration for the way in which they defended their country.

Because, after all, in New Zealand we had no other right than might. It was the land of the Maoris, and we cannot blame them for refusing to hand it over to us except by the force of arms.

The Romans in the olden days had a motto which has always been praised as a noble saying: "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*"—"Sweet and proper is it to die for the fatherland."

The same spirit animated the Maoris, and when they gave battle to the British their war-cry rang out, "Let us die for the land!"

Once, when a little band of warriors advanced to almost certain death into the fire of a British army, one of the young warriors, who was mortally wounded, was asked why so small a number had dared to attack a great force, and the answer, uttered in all simplicity, was, "No man who is not ready to fight for the land deserves to have the land."

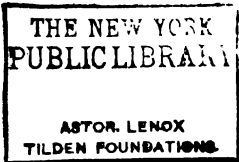
This saying has always been remembered as the words of a hero who showed the spirit of an heroic race.

A Terrible Death Rate.

During the wars between the Maoris and our own soldiers the islanders lost nearly 1,800 of their warriors killed in battle, and it is reckoned that



MAORI CHIEF.



in their own wars between tribe and tribe nearly 100,000 of them were slain during the thirty years before 1843.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the Maori race steadily decreased in numbers during the nineteenth century. Whereas in the days of Cook they numbered about 160,000, there are now only about 42,000 of these brave people in existence.

Since 1869, when the long war came to an end, there has been peace in New Zealand, and white man and Maori now live side by side in perfect friendship and with mutual admiration.

The Maoris have been left in possession of great estates, and if a white man wishes to buy any of this land he has to pay a good price for it; and if a Maori does not choose to sell his land, there is no force permitted by the British Government to take it from him.

Educated Natives.

At the present day most of these people are as civilised as the British colonists who live in their midst.

They have adopted the religion of Christianity, and abandoned the old customs of cannibalism and savage cruelties which were formerly common.

They have a great desire for education, and Maori children attend the native schools with great eagerness, and are quick at learning.

Some of the men are skilful and industrious farmers, and are amassing considerable wealth. Others have become barristers, and others, again, are among the most distinguished scholars at the New Zealand University. They also elect men of

their own race to be members of the Colonial Parliament, and so assist in making the laws by which both the British colonists and the Maori people are governed.

Maori Eloquence.

The customs and character of the people are very interesting.

They have a great fondness for poetry and story-telling, and have stored up in their memory a vast number of legends and fairy-tales, and heroic poems narrating the warlike deeds of their ancestors, which they take a delight in reciting upon festive occasions. Many of these poems and tales are very beautiful, and have been translated into our own language by English writers who have learnt the Maori speech and love the Maori people.

They have a great power of imagination, and are gifted with a natural eloquence which they practise in speeches delivered upon public occasions, which are wonderfully impressive when spoken in the musical language of their race.

Unfortunately they are not as a rule fond of work, and many of them prefer to live a life of idleness upon the money paid to them by the British colonists for their rich land. There is, however, every hope that in the future, when their new education will have encouraged them to lead lives of greater usefulness, these people will be among the most worthy citizens of the British Empire.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCENERY OF NORTH ISLAND.

NEW ZEALAND is divided into the two large islands called North Island and South Island, the latter being sometimes known as Middle Island. Off the southern coast of this there is another island, small and unimportant, called Stewart Island.

The Two Islands.

The two great islands have a length of 1,100 miles, and they are so narrow that no place in the centre of them is more than 75 miles from the coast.

Each island is crossed by a range of mountains, which divides it into two parts, east and west, but whereas there are many great plains and grass-clad hills in North Island, the greater part of South Island is covered by broad and lofty mountains, rising into snow-clad peaks.

The highest of these is Mount Cook, which is 12,348 feet high, and upon whose slopes are many immense glaciers, or floating rivers of ice.

Many of the mountain peaks in the North Island are extinct volcanoes, and there can still be seen at their summits the hollow craters from which issued fire and lava. The tallest of these is Mount Egmont, which rises in solitary grandeur, and is

perpetually snow-capped. It is situated near the town of New Plymouth, in the midst of well-cultivated plains.

Two or three of the volcanic mountains still show signs of activity, sending forth clouds of steam and vapour mixed with poisonous acids and gases. Slight earthquake shocks are also sometimes felt throughout the whole island.

The Hot Lake District.

One of the most remarkable parts of New Zealand is the region of the hot springs on North Island. They extend for about three hundred miles on the northern side of the island, and are one long chain of boiling geysers and steaming lakes, sulphur basins and plains of pumice-stone. Not many years ago, thousands of tourists came from all parts of the world to this hot lake district, partly because the waters are good for certain diseases, but attracted more by some famous rocks called the Pink and White Terraces.

These were formed by the lava of ancient volcanoes, which had cooled into shining masses of rock, wonderful in their seemingly artificial formation, and exquisitely beautiful in colour.

In 1886, however, a great disaster happened. A terrible explosion of steam given off by the boiling waters beneath Mount Tarawera rent the hillside, and cast huge masses of rock and stone upon the famous terraces, burying them for ever, with the little houses and hotels which had been built there for the accommodation of visitors.

The Pink and White Terraces.

Here is a description of the wonderful terraces by a traveller who saw them shortly before their destruction :

“ Standing on the lake shore, at the foot of the White Terrace, we look up and behold a mass of white, coral-like platforms piled up one upon another to the height of what would be eighty feet vertical, but that they gradually shelve backward and upward to the summit, which is 300 yards from the water.

“ The shelves thus formed are covered with basins and cups filled with warm water of a deep blue colour, perpetually rippling down from an unseen source above, over their edges, fringed with innumerable stalactites, into the lake at our feet. Gazing upwards, we see at the top of the Terrace nothing but clouds of steam, and we hear bubbling, roaring, and booming noises as of a huge cauldron of boiling water. . . . Having reached the summit (one of us with a scalded foot), we are startled to find the source of all this hot water to be an immense geyser, which shoots up into the air from the unknown depths of a vast cauldron of rock, upon the rim of which we are now standing. . . .

“ With but a little knowledge of geology, a comprehensive glance around showed us the process of formation of this beautiful structure. Centuries ago, a geyser of great force and volume burst out near the lake margin, through a hill formed of mixed clays and decomposed lava.

“ After partly crumbling away the slope of the hill, it kept depositing on the ledges into which the ground was formed, by the water flowing over rock and soil of various resisting powers, the silicates which had been

dissolved in its water under enormous subterranean pressure at a very high temperature—thus building up the wondrous terraces, basins, and stalactites before us. What remains of the harder strata of the original hill is a nearly vertical wall of rock, surrounding the geyser except at one side.

“The day was warm and bright, with a pleasant breeze. What, I thought, is the much-praised Taj Mahal of Agra, and what are the most elaborately carved cathedral sculptures of the Old Country, all the work of man, beautiful though they are, compared to this lovely tracery sculptured by the Creator!

“The sapphire blue of the water in the countless cups and pools sparkling in the brilliant sunshine, and contrasting beautifully with the alabaster fretwork done in semi-transparent yet permanent stone, inimitable by man; the awe-inspiring geyser roaring above; the dull green, dismal lake below; the barren hills around, desolate, treeless, and uninhabited; the dusky aborigines grouped around us; heaven’s azure expanse above us—all these elements combined to produce a picture which even a skilful artist could but inadequately portray, and which my words can but feebly represent to those who have never been there.”

This vivid description is interesting, not only because it gives an account of one of the wonders of New Zealand now passed away, but because it conveys some idea of those boiling springs which are so plentiful in this region.

The Medicinal Baths.

The sulphur lakes, and warm lakes, and mineral springs, which are very numerous here, are very

valuable for curing skin diseases, rheumatism, gout, and other maladies.

Some of them are given peculiar names on account of their different characteristics.

There is, for instance, the Laughing Gas Bath, so called because the gas arising from the surface of the water has an exciting effect, causing people to laugh and shout while they are under its influence.

Then there is the Pain Killer Bath, which has a wonderfully soothing power upon gouty and rheumatic joints.

Among others there is the Blue Bath, sometimes called the Chameleon Spring, on account of the changing colours of the water; and the Coffee Pot, which gets its name from the brown and bubbling liquid of the spring.

The Plains of North Island.

Although the "spine," as one might say, of North Island is hilly and in parts mountainous, there are great plains which offer a welcome to the farmer in search of rich land for agriculture. It is calculated that at least 13,000,000 acres of land in the level parts of the country is suitable for farming purposes.

Formerly, a large part of this rolling country was covered with dense forests, but the colonists are year by year clearing the ground by cutting down the trees and burning them, afterwards planting grass seed in the ashes, which soon become changed into delicate green meadows, where sheep and cattle may obtain splendid pasture.

At least 14,000,000 acres of land, too hilly for corn-growing and other branches of agriculture, are

available for pastoral requirements, because, however steep the ground, and however thin the soil, it is found that in this climate English grasses flourish luxuriantly.

Lake Taupo.

In the centre of North Island is a lake about twenty miles across each way, called Lake Taupo, at one end of which the largest river in North Island, called the Waikato, flows in a north-westerly direction to the ocean, which it reaches just below Manukau Harbour on the west coast.

This lake is surrounded by a district covered with pumice-stone, which once came from volcanic eruptions, and is therefore unsuitable for cultivation. It is in the centre of the sulphur baths which I have described in the foregoing pages.

The River Waikato is navigable for small steamers for about a hundred miles from its mouth.

The King Country.

To the west of it, between Lake Taupo and the coast, is a district known as the Maori King Country.

It was here that a tribe of Maori warriors came to settle for several years when their race had been defeated by the British, and here they lived in solitude, refusing to hold any communication with white people, and allowing no strangers to pass through the country.

of the Rippling Waters.

be isolated themselves in the country
Lake Taupo, in the neighbourhood of

a lake called Waikaremona, which is a Maori word meaning "the Sea of the Rippling Waters."

It is surrounded by noble forests and great frowning rocks covered with tangled plants. Here the heroic Maori warriors held out longest against the forces of the "pakeha," or foreigner, as they called the white man, and in this stronghold they remained undaunted and unconquered, defying all attempts to break down their defence.

In 1895, however, when the bitterness of their hatred for us had somewhat passed away, they invited Mr. Seddon, the Prime Minister of the Colony, to make a tour through their land, conducting him with great ceremony, and extending to him a simple but chivalrous hospitality.

Mr. Seddon still tells the story with gratitude and admiration of how his life was saved by the skill and courage of the Maori canoemen, when he was caught in a sudden storm upon "the Sea of the Rippling Waters," which then was by no means "rippling," but lashed into furious waves.

During this time of peril he was interested to observe the anxious care which was being given to his portmanteau by one of the Maoris, and upon asking the reason was told that in the case of the canoe capsizing the faithful Maori would hold on to the "pakeha's" bag. The "pakeha" was their guest, his portmanteau had been entrusted to the boatman's care, and the honour of the tribe required that the boatman must take it ashore in safety or perish with it in the angry waters.

The native people were not nearly so much concerned with Mr. Seddon himself as with his bag,

thinking that the "great white chief" would surely be able to swim better than any Maori.

The Wanganui River.

To the south-west of Lake Taupo, the real centre of the island, is the valley of the most beautiful river in New Zealand, the Wanganui.

It flows between hills clothed in soft feathery woods, which creep down to the river's bank, and are reflected upon the mirror of the water. At some parts on either side rise bold, white cliffs, with a crown of ferns and flowers upon their summits, and with glorious waterfalls dashing down their sides.

Here and there the river plunges over roaring rapids, which have no terrors, however, for the New Zealander, who "jumps" them in his light canoe. Away on either side stretch green pasture lands dotted with little towns and hamlets nestling in the valleys, or perched upon the cliffs.

Fat cattle feed leisurely in the lush meadows, and upon the rolling downs are flocks of sheep, which, in the distance, look as if snow had fallen upon the green grass.

There is no more beautiful scenery in the world than along the valley of the Wanganui, and it deserves the name sometimes given to it of the New Zealand Rhineland.

The City of Auckland.

It is now time to say something of the chief cities of North Island.

Auckland is a splendid seaport, situated on a



Photo : Burton Bros., Dunedin.

BEALEY, NEW ZEALAND.

peninsula about seven miles wide standing out into the Hauraki Gulf.

It is approached by the Waitemata Harbour, which affords shelter to the largest steamers afloat, and is provided with great wharves and docks, which offer the most complete facilities for shipping.

Auckland has been called "the city of delightful views," and certainly there is no more beautiful sight than the panorama of the well-built town with the wide sweep of the harbour at its front, with beautiful garden-suburbs surrounding it, the blue waters of the gulf stretching away in the distance dotted with little islands, and a range of green hills rising into the clear blue sky on the southern side.

The golden sunshine streaming upon the sparkling waters, the pleasure boats skimming swiftly upon their rippling surface, the red and white houses of city and suburbs, the beauty of the country around encircled by the hills, all combine to make the view of Auckland wonderfully impressive.

The city was founded in 1840, and was given its name in honour of Lord Auckland, who was at that time Governor-General of India. It has rapidly grown in size and prosperity, and out of the public rates as well as by the generosity of wealthy citizens many fine public buildings have been given to it. Among the most important of these are the University College and the Cathedral.

The special pride of the Aucklanders is in the Free Library and Art Gallery, built at a cost of £40,000, and enriched by an almost priceless collection of antiquities and artistic treasures presented by Sir

George Grey, who will always be remembered for the great services he rendered to New Zealand when he was Prime Minister of the colony.

Auckland contains a beautiful botanical garden and two public parks, and is connected by railway to numerous country villages which encircle the city, so that the people have ample opportunity of getting fresh air and exercise.

Many great industries, such as glass manufacture, timber-cutting, shipbuilding, and sugar-refining, are carried on in the town, and the workmen are as prosperous as, perhaps more prosperous than, in any part of Australasia.

Mr. Michael Davitt, once a member of Parliament in this country, who made a lengthy tour of Australia to study the position of the working classes, says that "like all the workers I saw in New Zealand, they wear the looks of men and women who are well contented with their superior social condition and unequalled labour laws, as well they may. In this respect there are no workers more favoured in the world of industry to-day, because no other Government in any civilised country has thrown a more complete legal shield around the health, protection, and interests of its wage-earners than that of this enlightened colony."

Auckland gives its name to what is called the northern provincial district of New Zealand, which includes fully a half of North Island, and having within its area the Hot Lake District, the country around Lake Taupo, and the Waikato country of the Maoris, to which I have already alluded.

The City of Wellington.

Until the year 1865 Auckland was the capital town of the colony, but after that date the honour was given to Wellington on account of its central position in the two great islands which form New Zealand.

It has a good harbour, but the entrance to it is rather narrow, which makes it a dangerous passage for big ships in stormy weather.

The town itself looks very picturesque as one approaches it by boat. It is built in a semicircular shape on the slopes of a ring of green hills.

A closer inspection, however, shows that it is not so imposing a city as Auckland, the streets being narrow and the houses small and plain-looking. Many of the public buildings are made of timber, partly because of the earthquake shocks which used to trouble this district, and made it inadvisable to erect expensive stone buildings. These, however, are gradually being replaced by structures more suitable to the dignity of a capital town, and there are a number of fine stone churches, which help to make the city more impressive.

Napier.

Napier is the next town of importance in North Island. It is a distance of two hundred miles from Wellington, the country in between being a rich farming district with prosperous little villages, many of which belong to the Maoris.

Napier itself is surrounded with rolling grasslands which give pasture to many thousands of sheep.

The town is on the eastern sea-coast, at a spot



Photo : Burton Bros., Dunedin.

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND.

where the South Pacific Ocean beats with great violence upon the cliffs. The inhabitants have spent an immense amount of money in building a breakwater, which acts as a barrier against the leaping waves, and allows vessels to find a safe refuge in the harbour.

There is nothing remarkable about the prosperous little town, which holds about 12,000 people, and is built in a solid and comfortable style, as befits a place where many wealthy sheep-farmers are established.

Perhaps the most interesting thing to mention is the fact that the chief thoroughfares are named after great English poets and writers. This means of keeping alive the memories of men and women who have added to the wit, wisdom, and happiness of the British race is a custom that is worthy of being followed in other cities.

The Scenery of Middle Island.

The two great islands of New Zealand are divided by Cook Strait, only 16 miles across in its narrowest part and 90 in its widest. This branch of the sea makes a water highway which is very valuable for the purpose of traffic between different parts of New Zealand.

The greatest length of Middle Island is 525 miles from point to point, and the greatest width across the southern part of the island is 85 miles:

As I have already mentioned, a great mountain chain extends right through the island, and covers a vast area equal to about two-thirds of the entire surface.

The Southern Alps.

These mountains are called the Southern Alps of New Zealand, and undoubtedly their magnificent scenery is equal to, if not more sublime than, that of the Alps in Europe.

Although the peaks are not quite so high as those in Switzerland, they are continually capped with snow and ice, and have all the grandeur which belongs to mountains clothed in a white garment.

In the south there are many magnificent peaks, though not of such great height as those further north, where Mount Earnshaw, rising above Lake Wakatipu, and Mount Aspiring above Lake Wanaka are nearly 10,000 feet high.

To the north, again, towering towards the average level of the mountain range, are Mount Sefton and Mount Cook, the latter being the highest peak in New Zealand, rising to 12,348 feet.

It is impossible to describe in words the beauties and the wonders of these mighty hills. For hundreds of miles they rise, peak towering above peak, with their summits crowned in white where the snow and ice lie thick upon them.

Enormous ice-fields stretch between them, and in the clefts of the rock are great waterfalls which hurl themselves downwards with a deep murmurous noise. On the lower slopes the mountains are clothed with dark forests of fir trees with gaps between them, where naked rocks stand sheer down for hundreds of feet, like the walls of some giant's castle. And below, at their feet, the snow, the ice, the forests and the rocks are reflected in the glassy surface of broad lakes, deep and blue when the sun shines, and gleaming like

polished silver in the light of the moon. Wonderful is it when the dawn breaks over the great heights and flushes the snow with a glorious pink which gradually turns to gold as the sky is flooded with the light of day. Swift shadows and bright flashes of sunshine chase each other across the slopes, and the eyes of the traveller gaze in ecstasy at the wondrous beauty of the view on every side of him.

Then at night, when the moon sails in solitary and solemn splendour through the steel blue sky, it seems as if the rocks are turned into mighty fortresses, great cathedrals, high towers, and fairy palaces, some of them deep in shadow and others gleaming like silver as the moonlight falls upon them.

"The beauty of the exquisite scenery," says a writer named Van Hoorst, who first explored these mountains, "is still further heightened by the magnificent forest vegetation which covers the mountain side for about 1,000 feet, succeeded above by Alpine vegetation, over and through which the rocky pinnacles, pyramids, and other masses—often shaped into fantastic forms—stretch towards the sky."

The Rivers of Middle Island.

The snow and ice on the mountains cause the rivers of Middle Island to be for the most part rapid torrents, too dangerous for boating purposes. When the snow melts they rise into floods, sweeping onwards more like lakes than rivers, and carrying with them masses of shingle torn from the mountain sides.

The chief river of Middle Island is the Clutha,

154 miles in length, but boats or small river steamers may only go upon it for about 30 miles.

The other rivers of any importance are the Buller, Grey, and Hokitika, on the west coast of the island. The two first-named rivers are used for carrying the coal from the mines in their neighbourhood to the sea coast, and on account of their usefulness in this way, great sums of money have been spent in widening and deepening them so that larger vessels may come down them without fear of grounding.

The Plains of Middle Island.

Although Middle Island is largely mountainous, and therefore unsuited in those regions for farming of any kind, there are about 2,000,000 acres which offer every advantage to those who wish to make a success in agriculture; as well as 13,000,000 acres of grassland providing good pasturage.

The chief plains of the islands with these advantages are Canterbury, Otago, and Switzerland.

Canterbury.

The Canterbury Plains stretch for about 160 miles along the east coast in an almost unbroken level.

They are one vast area of waving cornfields and green downs, with thousands of little homesteads scattered over their surface, surrounded by fine trees that give a picturesque variety to the yellow and green expanses in which they stand.

The streams which course down the mountain sides which form the boundaries of the plains, swelled

by the water of melting snow and ice, provide the means of irrigating the farm-lands, and little channels thread their way through this "happy valley," making the soil fertile, and preventing all fear of drought. The great farms are divided by hedges of gorse, and when they are in flower the countryside is marked out with lines of glorious gold, and the air is laden with a sweet fragrance. Here and there small towns are growing up in the midst of this land of plenty, the largest of them being Ashburton, Ellesmere, and Christchurch.

The City of the Plains.

The latter is often called "The City of the Plains," and in spite of being so recently built, it has the solid quiet and charming appearance of an old English town.

Its wealthy citizens, who have made large fortunes out of the rich soil around it, have shown their gratitude to the land of their adoption by beautifying the city in which they have made their home, giving to it a noble cathedral and numerous well-built churches, a large museum, many imposing schools and colleges, and last, but not least, the finest park and plantation of English trees in Australasia.

Not only is the town essentially English in character, but the life of the Britons of the south in this city of the plains is exactly like the habits and customs of the people in the "old country." Cricket and football, tennis and boating, cycling and athletic sports of all kinds are indulged in with the same enthusiasm as in England.

"In all these things," says a New Zealand writer,

"what is said of Christchurch can be said of all other cities and towns of this very Britannic colony, and has been said admirably by recent visitors, particularly foreign travellers, who, after the bustle and hurry of American life, are struck with the leisurely calm and British earnestness with which our people do things here. It helps them, perhaps, to understand the outburst of loyalty which, by sending the flower of our youth to the battlefields of South Africa (at the time of the Boer War) has proclaimed the solidarity of the British Empire."

As a distinguished French critic has observed, "They have even contrived to give their towns the ancient look that is the special characteristic of the old provincial cities of their native land. Truly," he adds, "the Briton, when he goes to settle abroad, takes his country with him."

Dunedin.

The other chief cities of Middle Island—Dunedin in the south-east, Invercargill in the south, and Blenheim in the north—are not less English in appearance and in the character of their social life.

Dunedin, however, has a somewhat Scottish character, and many of its people come from "the land of the heather," or are descended from parents whose homes were at one time in Scotland. It is a well-built city, at the head of a long and narrow channel, whose bright waters are crowded with vessels come to bring or carry away cargoes of all that goes to make modern trade.

The Sounds.

The traveller who crosses Cook Strait from North Island to Middle Island reaches a jagged coast-line broken by deep and narrow fiords, bays, channels, islands, and rugged headlands.

This region of the coast is called the Northern Sounds.

To the south, great mountain peaks rise into the sky, and the sailors point out to ordinary strangers the tallest and grandest of them, known as the Mitre, Mount Gladstone, the Devil's Armchair, Mount Patriarch, and Mount Rintoul.

It was here that the Dutch explorer, Tasman, who was the first European to discover the coast, had a fight with the Maoris, and escaped at the peril of his life after his boat's crew had been killed.

Here, also, our own Captain Cook landed, getting on friendly terms with the natives, to whom he presented a number of pigs and fowls, which afterwards increased in great numbers and overran the district in a wild condition.

They were found sixty years later by British colonists, but the Maori people to whom they had been given had disappeared from this part of the country, the greater part of them having been slain by another tribe.

The "Sounds" of Middle Island extend down the west coast, and behind the chain of mountains which frown over the ocean is a hilly part of the country called Westland, famous as the gold district of New Zealand.

It is a wild and wonderful region, traversed by

swift rivers which rush down the mountain sides to the sea, and covered with great forests tangled with undergrowth of ferns and creeping plants, which in the summer are ablaze with flowers of gorgeous colour—the many-hued orchid, the white and blue clematis, and many blossoms of unfamiliar native names, scarlet and yellow, purple and violet.

For many miles these forests stretch southward, broken at times by swamps with waving reeds and the broad-leaved flax, and by patches of sunlit plains, or broad, shining lakes studded with little bowery islands; and from this woodland country rise the songs of many feathered inhabitants of the trees and the sweet odour of plant-life.

Sport in New Zealand.

New Zealand is, for more reasons than one, the most remarkable country in the world. But in nothing is it more remarkable than in the way it abounds in many wild animals, birds, and fish, which were quite unknown upon the two great islands less than sixty or seventy years ago.

Red Deer.

As late as 1862 not a stag had bounded upon the rocks of New Zealand or hidden in the leafy coverts. But in that year Prince Albert, the noble husband of Queen Victoria, presented the colony with three red deer from Windsor Forest. Now their descendants may be counted by thousands, and so well do they prosper that the animals are larger and finer than

those in the "old country," and their antlers have more magnificent proportions.

They roam in herds in the hilly country of North Island, and also, though in less numbers, in Middle Island. In the thick forests and secluded glens they find a natural home, undisturbed by the presence of man except in the hunting season, between the 1st of March and the 10th of May, when they are "stalked" by sportsmen, who find no place in the world so excellent for the enjoyment of this hard and adventurous kind of sport.

Besides the red deer, which have been introduced so successfully into the colony, there are many fine herds of fallow deer, and during recent years other more uncommon species have been taken to New Zealand, and will doubtless increase in numbers with equal rapidity.

Wild Pigs.

Captain Cook's tame and domesticated pigs soon became changed during their savage life in the woods into wild boars as ferocious as those of India, where "pig-sticking," as the hunting of them is called, is the favourite and one of the most exciting kinds of sport.

These boars haunt the dense forests and fern thickets of North Island.

"When sheep are in his neighbourhood," says a New Zealand writer, "he [the boar] likes a changing diet in the lambing season, for which reason the whole pastoral industry regards him as a sort of combination of shark, hawk, and cormorant, to be suppressed at any price. Consequently, gangs of men in various localities are making money steadily all the year round by

'killing pigs' as hard as they can. The boar gives noble sport, and his tusks are grand trophies. The sportsman is sure of an exciting time with rifle or spear."

In the pages devoted to Australia I have already described the ways of "pig-sticking," so that there is no need for me to give a further account in this place.

In addition to the wild boars descended from tame pigs, there are herds of wild cattle who have come in the same way from domestic ancestors, who forgot the gentle ways of civilisation when they were allowed to roam in the great forest lands, far from the guidance and discipline of men.

Trout.

Trout-fishing is another favourite sport of New Zealanders, and to-day most of the rivers in North and Middle Islands are stocked with the speckled darling of the fisherman.

Yet, considerably less than fifty years ago, there was not a single trout in New Zealand from one end to the other. Now licences are issued every year to nearly 3,000 anglers, and the railways and coaches make special journeys to favourite angling districts, where large hotels have been built to accommodate the enthusiastic fishers.

Game Birds.

For the man with the gun there is plenty of opportunity of becoming "a good shot" with every kind of wild game, a great number of varieties having been taken over from England and Scotland and other

parts of the world, including pheasants, plover, and the Californian quail. There are also many kinds of native game, such as the grey duck, Paradise duck, teal, widgeon, and black swan.

The Industries of New Zealand.

For its size, New Zealand is one of the richest countries in the world.

Although no great gold-fields have been found like those in Australia, where great nuggets were to be had merely for the digging, there are about 21,000 square miles in the colony where the rocks and the gravel of the river-beds contain gold in large quantities.

The rocks have to be crushed in expensive machines, and the gravel has to be washed and sifted before the gold can be extracted, but in spite of these difficulties nearly £60,000,000 worth of gold has been obtained in this way since 1857.

The Gold Rush.

As in Australia, the gold district of New Zealand remembers the days of a great "rush," when men swarmed in thousands through the mountain passes and fought their way through the tangled forests in search of the metal, many dying of disease and starvation, many drowning in the mountain torrents, many falling down dizzy precipices, as their fellows pressed onwards to the goldfields of Westland, probing rock and dredging river in the fever of expectancy.

But the "rush" did not last long, for those miners who hoped to make big fortunes by a week's digging

or dredging soon found that to crush the gold out of the quartz rocks and to sift the sands in the river-beds required expensive machinery and unlimited patience.

By degrees, therefore, the adventurers left New Zealand, and the gold-fields remained in the hands of those who were content and who could afford to develop an industry which required a large capital for working expenses, and which was then profitable, without the hope of enormous "finds."

Coal.

New Zealand is immensely rich in coal-fields, which yield an almost inexhaustible supply of the precious fuel.

On the west coast of Middle Island there are enormous seams of the best coal 18 feet to 40 feet deep, and a large part of North Island is one vast coalfield.

There are 160 coal-fields being worked at the present time, employing over two thousand men, and giving an "output," as it is called, every year, amounting to nearly one million tons.

Frozen Meat.

One of the most profitable industries of the colony is the exporting of frozen meat.

With such enormous pasture-lands, where great flocks of sheep are richly and cheaply nourished, the price of New Zealand mutton is naturally much less than English mutton, the reason of course being that land in this country is so much more valuable and

so much more limited than in the two great islands of the South Pacific Ocean.

It pays New Zealand farmers to send their mutton 12,000 miles to London, where they are able to sell it at a profit more cheaply, in spite of the cost of transit, than English farmers can sell their own South Down mutton. Not until about 1889, however, did it occur to New Zealand farmers that they might sell their mutton in English markets, because it seemed impossible to send it such a long distance so that it would arrive in good condition. At last, however, experiments showed that if the mutton were frozen before being taken on board ship, it would keep perfectly fresh for many weeks.

Freezing Mutton.

Great care is used by the New Zealand farmers in securing good breeds of sheep for the mutton which is to be sent to the English market. When the animals are in perfect condition they are taken from the paddocks where they have been reared and fattened, to the freezing establishment, which is usually built beside the sea coast, so as to be near the place of shipment.

The sheep are first skilfully slaughtered, skinned and dressed ready for the market, great attention being paid to perfect cleanliness. After being hung up some hours to cool, the carcasses are transferred to the freezing chamber. This is a large room provided with thick walls and heavy doors completely excluding light and heat.

The atmosphere within this great chamber is as cold as that of the Arctic regions, and the breath of

the attendants condenses into white vapour as it leaves their lips. Thousands of carcasses hang up in rows, each one of them as hard and cold as marble.

In this state each one is wrapped in a clean white sheet and transferred to the store rooms of a great ocean steamer which is bound for the port of London.

Here visitors who obtain permission to visit the warehouses of the London Docks may see them stored in thousands, exactly in the same condition as when they left the New Zealand coast, and here the great meat salesmen of London come to purchase them as quickly as they arrive for distribution into almost every city, town, and village of Great Britain.

Other Exports.

Besides mutton New Zealand supplies this country with other articles of food, such as beef, frozen and tinned, corn, butter, and fruit. It also sends many farm and dairy products to Australia. North and Middle Island never suffer from drought, which is the curse of Australia; so that when crops and grain and vegetables have failed in Queensland or South Australia, New Zealand comes to the rescue and fills the Australian markets with as much as they require.

I have already mentioned the flax plant, with its broad-shaped leaf from four to eight feet long. Out of this leaf a coarse fibre is obtained, useful for making strong rope, and large quantities of the raw material is shipped over to England and other countries for that purpose.

Kauri Gum.

The forests of North Island are largely populated by the kauri-tree, from which a valuable gum is obtained. But much larger quantities of this gum are found in a fossil condition in the northern district of Auckland, which is dug up from the soil, where it has lain for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years after dropping from forests which have long since disappeared.

Kauri gum is very like amber in appearance, and has a large sale in Great Britain and America, where it is used for making the best and most expensive kinds of varnish.

The industry was first established about fifty years ago, at which time the gum was sold at £5 per ton. But from then up to the present time the value of the gum has risen enormously, so that it now fetches more than £50 per ton.

The area of the kauri-fields covers about 800,000 acres, half of which belong to the British Crown, a quarter to the Maoris, and another quarter to private individuals.

The industry employs about 7,000 persons, of whom many are natives.

The only implements a gum-digger requires are a long steel rod and a shovel. The former he thrusts here and there into the ground until he touches a piece of gum, which practice enables him to distinguish from any other substance. This he then proceeds to dig out. Sometimes the gum is in small lumps, sometimes in pieces that weigh a hundred-weight.

The average amount of gum obtained in a year by

these methods is about 11,000 tons, equal in value to £600,000.

With these natural riches above and below the soil, it is not to be wondered at that New Zealand is, for its size, the richest and most prosperous colony of the British Empire.

CHAPTER. XV.

TASMANIA.

Two hundred miles to the south of Australia, across the Bass Straits, lies the beautiful island of Tasmania. It is about five-sixths the size of Ireland, and in certain parts of its scenery bears a resemblance to that country.

The Discovery.

It was first discovered in 1642, by a Dutch navigator named Abel Tasman, who was sent out to explore "The Great South Land" by Anthony Van Diemen, the Governor of the Dutch East Indies.

He touched at the south-east point of the island and cruised along the coasts for about five days, coming to the conclusion that it was a part of the continent of Australia, and having no idea that it was a separate island.

Van Diemen's Land.

He named the newly discovered country Van Diemen's Land, in honour of the man who sent him upon the expedition. For more than two centuries the maps of this part of the world retained the name, and it was only in 1856, a year after the island was made an independent colony of Great Britain, that it was decided to call it henceforth Tasmania, after the brave sailor who had first set foot upon its shores.

For one hundred years after its discovery the island remained unvisited by other Europeans. A French seaman was the next to explore its coast, but he was beaten off by the natives.

In 1773, the first British subject gazed upon the land which was to be the future home of many of his countrymen. This was Captain Furneaux, who sailed in the good ship *Adventure* to a bay on the coast of Tasmania, which he named after his vessel. He explored a considerable portion of the coast-line, but he, too, was firmly convinced that it was a part of the mainland of Australia.

Then came Captain Cook in 1777, who added a little more to the knowledge of the shores, and became friendly with some of the natives, but even he did not find out that it was an island.

Bass's Exploration.

This discovery was to the honour of a naval surgeon named Bass, who performed a daring and remarkable feat. He left the harbour of Port Jackson, or Sydney as it is now more often called, in a small boat with a crew of eight men, and succeeded in making his way across the strait now called after his own name, to the northern shore of Tasmania, after a voyage of seven weeks. By this means it was now made clear that Australia was not joined to Tasmania, which was therefore an island. Bass discovered the inlet now known as Dalrymple Bay, where the fine city of Launceston has been built, and travelled into the heart of the country, learning for the first time what beautiful scenery and natural advantages the new land possessed.

Tasmania Annexed.

The news of this island, nearly as large as Ireland, with a climate as perfect as any in the world, and with every likelihood of being a suitable place for farming, became known to the British Government, and they decided to make it a part of the British Empire before any other nation like France, Germany, or Holland could claim it. In 1803, therefore, the Union Jack fluttered to the top of a flagstaff on the seashore, as a sign that this was British territory.

The Convict Settlement.

Then, at the same time as the first convict-ships were being sent with their unhappy passengers to New South Wales, a number of prisoners were sent out from England to Van Diemen's Land, as it was then called, to make the beginning of a new colony.

For fifty years the island was used for this purpose, until, in 1853, no more convicts were sent out.

But although the prisoners made roads which were very useful in opening up the country, and cultivated some of the land, they were never so useful as in New South Wales, because the free settlers who came out to the colony were not allowed to engage the help of the convicts as they did in Australia. The unhappy prisoners were closely confined to one part of the island, and little opportunity was given them to improve their condition and help forward the prosperity of the island.

It was a long time also before many free people came from the "Old Country" to settle in this island in the Southern Seas, so that it is only during the last fifty years that this beautiful land has been turned

into a civilised country, with a large population of prosperous citizens.

The Natives.

One of the reasons which prevented a rapid development of Tasmania during the first half of the nineteenth century, was the fierceness of the natives, who carried on a deadly warfare with the white men who came to settle in their island.

The Tasmanian aborigines were a very low type of savages. The Maoris of New Zealand had, and still have, many noble characteristics, and are highly intelligent. Even the blackfellows of Australia, who were very inferior to the natives of New Zealand, could boast of considerable skill in the making of weapons, and hunting, and in many ways they were not without good qualities belonging to human beings who are raised far above the state of savage animals.

But the Tasmanian was hardly better than a wild beast, fierce, ignorant, treacherous, and untamable, with hardly sufficient intelligence to enable him to keep from starving, or falling a prey to the four-footed inhabitants of the woods.

When the first European people came to Tasmania there were about 5,000 of these savages roaming over the island in a wild state; and now—a pitiful story it is to tell—not one Tasmanian aborigine is to be found in the country.

Their race has quite died out, the last man among them in 1869, and the last woman in 1876.

War to the Knife.

It is a tragic thing to relate that a cruel and bloodthirsty hatred raged between the white men

and black, and the history of their intercourse is a long record of murders, forest fights, and man-hunts.

The black people were guilty of horrible crimes whenever they were able to overcome any of the British colonists. Many a time a little village has been surrounded by a savage tribe and every man, woman, and child has been slain or tortured to death. Many a time an honest farmer cutting down the tangled bush has suddenly fallen with his head cleft in two from a blow behind by a savage who has crept up silently under cover of the trees.

But the white men took a terrible revenge.

Gathering together in bands they hunted the Tasmanians as if they had been tigers or wolves, and before many years had passed the savage tribes were almost annihilated, and the small remnant of two hundred who remained, were shipped off to a barren rock called Flinders Isle, where most of them died of starvation and disease.

Too Late to Mend.

Then for the first time the British settlers in Tasmania took pity upon these miserable people, and forty who still survived, the last of their race, were brought back in 1850 to their native island, treated with great kindness, and provided with clothing, food, and other necessities of life.

But they lingered only a little time, and in a few years only one man remained alive to tell the story of his race.

This man was called King Billy by the people of Hobart, where he lived, and very proud he was of the title. His death occurred in 1869, and he was

followed, as I have mentioned, in 1876, by the last woman of his tribe.

With these two people the island of Tasmania was cleared for ever of the dusky savages who had been the original owners of this beautiful little country.

Tasmanian Scenery.

Tasmania might be called the holiday island of Australia, because during the summer months a great number of Australian people come here to be set up in health by the cool and delightful climate, as well as to enjoy the beautiful scenery which reminds the colonists from Ireland or Scotland of their own native land.

It is a hilly country, but the mountains have not the grandeur of those of New Zealand, and are more like the Scottish highlands, while the streams which flow swiftly over gravelly boulder-strewn beds, through picturesque glens and woody hills, are wonderfully like those of Scotland.

There are many such rivers in Tasmania, and the largest of them, that is the Tamar, Derwent, Gordon, and Huan, are deep enough for vessels of fair size to sail a good many miles from their mouths.

Hobart, the capital of Tasmania, stands on the Derwent river, which is navigable for over 60 miles, and Launceston, the oldest town in the island, is on the Tamar.

The Lakes.

Although the greater part of the island is covered by mountains, there are wide stretches of level plains, and in the north-west there is a great "table-land,"

as it is called, rising to a height of 3,000 feet above the level of the sea, but having a flat surface of about 60 miles each way.

Upon this high table-land lie the lakes of Tasmania, which form the most beautiful scenery in the island. The Great Lake has a circumference of 90 miles, and is surrounded by lovely woods of eucalyptus trees and gum trees, and green feathery tree-ferns, amidst which glows the golden blossom of the wattle, growing down to the water's edge and reflected in the mirror-like surface of the lake.

Up the Tamar.

The traveller from Australia having crossed the Bass Straits enters the broad mouth of the Tamar, up which he sails for 50 miles before reaching the city of Launceston.

As one writer says, "It is like a trip into fairy-land." On each side of him the woods are close to the river's banks, and as the stream twists and turns, opening every few miles into a wider expanse of water, it seems as if it formed a chain of lakes. Here and there upon a high overhanging bank is perched a little cottage with its smoke curling up among the trees, and looking quite blue against the leafy background.

Launceston.

Launceston itself is built between two wooded hills, and its houses climb up the slopes on either side.

It is very impressive when seen from the river, its church towers and spires and imposing public



Photo : J. W. Beattie, Hobart.

THE KING RIVER, TASMANIA.

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buildings rising into the clear sky with a picturesque effect.

And upon entering the town the visitor is delighted with its clean and bright appearance, most of the houses being substantially built in a whitish stone. Brisbane Street, St. John Street, and Prince's Square are splendid thoroughfares, lined with public buildings, which give evidence of the wealth and good taste of the citizens.

Launceston, as already mentioned, is the oldest city in Tasmania, and next to Sydney the oldest in the whole of Australasia. It was from this town that men went out to explore the colony of Victoria, and to found the city of Melbourne.

Outside Launceston, within a circle of about fifty miles, there are numerous little townships scattered about a land covered with splendid farms, orchards, and sheep-runs. And only twelve miles from the city is the little town of Beaconsfield, where some rich gold-mines are being worked, and are giving forth large quantities of that most precious mineral.

The Cataract Gorge.

The favourite walk of the Launceston people is to a wonderful place called the Cataract Gorge. It is a deep cleft in a great rock rising above the town down which a river called the South Esk rushes swiftly over big boulders, which are strewn like giant pebbles along the gorge, causing the stream to foam and hiss as it passes them with an almost angry roar, on its way to the Tamar, which it joins with its waters.

On each side of the Cataract Gorge the inhabitants

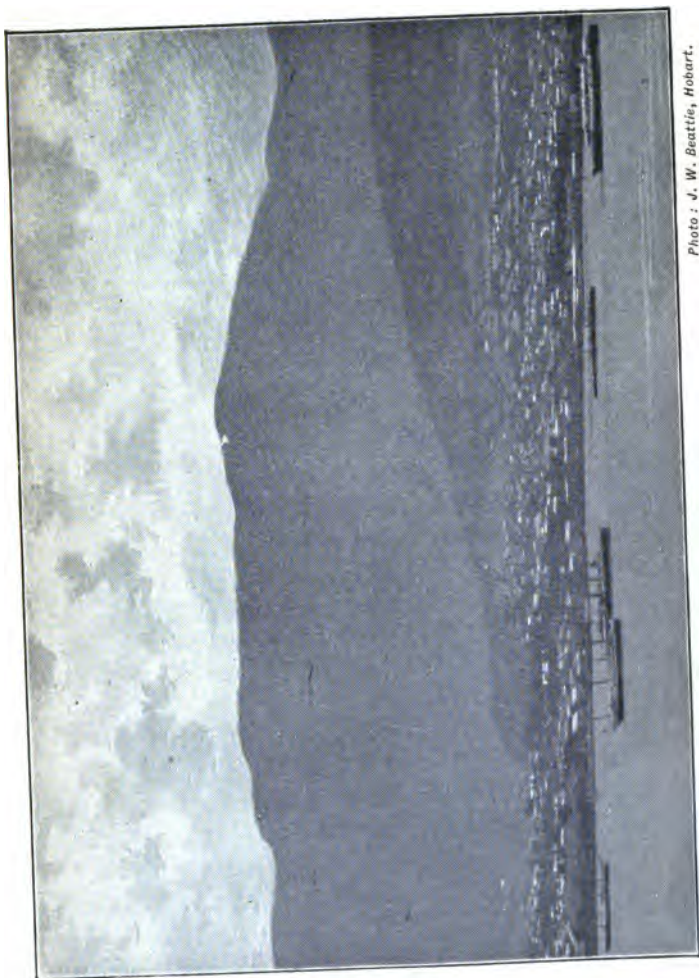


Photo : J. W. Beattie, Hobart.

HOBART TASMANIA.

of Launceston have made a picturesque and romantic walk by planting shrubs and trees, cutting out little bowers in the rocks, and otherwise adding to the attractions of the pleasure resort.

As a well-known writer remarks: "Some of the best views of the town below are obtained as you descend the banks of the galloping torrent, and the whole outlook is one on which the eyes of the visitor love to linger in the enjoyment of what nature and art combined have done to create an ideal place for a city's promenade."

Hobart.

Perhaps even more picturesque than Launceston, as seen from the Tamar, is the approach to Hobart, the capital city of Tasmania.

The harbour is considered as fine as any in Australasia, and the town is embosomed in a mass of luxuriant vegetation. It stands at the mouth of the Derwent River, and as a vessel glides out of Storm Bay into the shelter of the harbour, the travellers gaze in rapture at their first view of the city with the wooded slopes of Mount Wellington rising magnificently beyond. The town is built on a series of knolls on terraces at the foot of the great hill, and its houses, gardens, orchards, and parks stretch down to the harbour, forming a remarkable and beautiful panorama.

The view is seen at its best from the heights of the Huan Road, which rumbles along the side of Mount Wellington, 2,000 feet above the town, through leafy woods fragrant with wild flowers, and tangled with ferns and shrubs, between which run

swift mountain streams, with here and there a bubbling waterfall splashing down for hundreds of feet where the rocks are steepest.

A Glorious View.

"The glimpses of Hobart and of the Derwent," writes Mr. Michael Davitt, "that break upon the view as you climb the steep road must be seen to be admired as they deserve. No description in words could do the barest justice to them. The picture between you and the horizon fairly takes your breath away; the sea running into Storm Bay, the bay losing itself in the calmer waters of the Derwent, and that river winding in and out of the timbered shores. Hills and valleys clothed in pine and gum trees extend beyond the river as far as you can see, to the east and west, mantled in a soft purplish haze, while Tasman's peninsula looks like some region of fairyland. . . . Around you, as you gaze down upon this fascinating panorama, there are giant Huan pines up-rearing their stately forms and foliage over a hundred feet, blue gums and other forest trees climbing up the sides of the mountain, while the white thorn peeps out from many leafy glades."

Tasmanian Fruit.

This delightful island might well be called "the Orchard of the Southern Seas." The climate is so suitable for growing fruit that this has become one of the chief industries of the people; and in every part of the little country we may see large orchards of apple and pear trees, apricots, currants, gooseberries, raspberries and strawberries.

Formerly the Tasmanians made most of this fruit into jam, as it seemed impossible to send the fresh fruit great distances over the sea without its being spoilt by the time it arrived at its destination. But in the same way that New Zealanders discovered that frozen meat could be sent as far as England in perfect condition, so the Tasmanian farmers found that if they packed their fruit in cool chambers they could send it across the seas for a distance of more than 12,000 miles, and that it could be sold in the London markets as fresh and good as when it was plucked from the trees.

Now at Covent Garden, the great fruit and vegetable market of London, during the months of April, May, and June, enormous quantities of fine fresh-looking apples may be seen every morning being unpacked from boxes. They are clearly not English fruit, because our own fruit harvest is in the autumn months, and as a matter of fact they have come all the way from Tasmania, where the seasons are the opposite of our own.

A Tasmanian Orchard.

Mr. G. R. Parkin, in his interesting book, "Round the Empire," gives the following account of fruit growing in Tasmania:—

"In the best Tasmanian orchards much skill is shown in the cultivation of fruit. The orchards are constantly tilled, and kept free from weeds throughout the year; water is often brought in channels from a considerable distance to irrigate the soil; the trees, as they grow, are carefully pruned in such a way as to admit the light and air to all parts, and

thus bring all the fruit to perfection. There are few pleasanter sights than that which a Tasmanian orchard of fifty or a hundred acres presents in the month of March or April, when every tree is laden with the rosy, russet, or golden fruit. From the orchard the fruit is taken to an apple storehouse, where many thousands of bushels may sometimes be seen together, sorted in separate bins according to their variety and quality. At the storehouses they are carefully packed in cases holding a bushel each, and are then shipped away to Australia or England."

Wool-growing.

More important, however, than the fruit of Tasmania, is the wool-growing industry, which is the chief source of wealth to the island, as it is of Australia and New Zealand.

The climate and soil have been found very suitable for carrying on experiments of breeding superior kinds of sheep with a view to improving the quality of the wool, and so successful have these been that the Australian sheep-farmers are eager to obtain Tasmanian sheep for their own flocks, paying sometimes as much as a thousand guineas for a single animal.

Tasmania's Treasure.

Not only is the rich soil of Tasmania a source of wealth to fruit-growers, sheep-farmers, and agriculturists, but in the very rocks and earth beneath lies an enormous treasure-trove.

From shore to shore Tasmania is stored with mineral wealth of almost every kind—gold, silver, copper, tin, coal, and many other metals and minerals.

Mines are being worked in many different localities, and the prosperity of the island is continually increasing.

In some parts lucky people have also discovered rocks in which precious gems are hidden, and large numbers of beautiful and valuable sapphires, topazes, cats' eyes, and other jewels have been brought to light.

The Animal World.

The animals, birds, and fish of Tasmania belong mostly to the same species as those in Australia, and many British birds and other inhabitants of the animal world have been introduced.

There are, however, a number of living creatures which are found in no other part of the globe. One of these is called the Tasmanian devil: it is about the size of a cat, a black, furry, little animal fond of flesh meat and a great enemy in the poultry yard.

Another animal peculiar to the island is the wolf-tiger, so called because it has a striped skin like the tiger and a bushy tail like the wolf. They have never been known to attack men, but wage war against sheep and other domestic animals. For this reason they have now become very rare, the farmers hunting them down and killing them whenever they can catch them.

Tasmania is one of the most interesting colonies of the British Empire, and the story of its development and progress is no less remarkable than that of Australia and New Zealand, which although vastly bigger are not more prosperous in any way.

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